













**THE SPELL OF  
THE HEART OF FRANCE**

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THE SPELL OF ALSACE

THE SPELL OF THE HEART OF  
FRANCE



THE PAGE COMPANY

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AQUEDUCT - MONTMARTRE  
1890

*The Aqueduct of Louis XIV, Maintenon.*

*From a water-color by Blanche McManus.*

*(See page 4.)*





# The SPELL of THE HEART of FRANCE

THE TOWNS, VILLAGES AND  
CHATEAUX ABOUT PARIS

BY

*André Hallays*

*Author of "The Spell of Alsace."  
Translated, with a foreword, by  
Frank Roy Fraprie, S.M., F.R.P.*



ILLUSTRATED



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## INTRODUCTION

WHOEVER has read "The Spell of Alsace" by André Hallays will need no introduction to the present book. While the work on Alsace was undoubtedly read by many because of its timely publication just at the close of the Great War, when Alsace and all things French were uppermost in the public mind, these readers found themselves held and charmed as much by Monsieur Hallays' wondrous talent for visualizing landscape and for infusing the breath of life into images of the past as by the inherent interest of the subjects on which he discoursed.

His books are not travel books in the hackneyed sense of the word. He does not catalogue the things which should be seen, or describe in guidebook fashion those objects which are starred by Baedeker. He does not care to take us to see the things which "every traveler ought to see." He specializes in the obscure and the little-known. He finds that the beauty of out-of-the-way places and objects far from the beaten track of tourist traffic is as great as can be found in famous spots, and far more gratifying because of the fact that

it can be observed in solitude and enjoyed in moods undisturbed by the multitude.

His manner of depicting landscapes is not by meticulous description, but by apparently casual touches of color, brilliantly illuminating what might to the ordinary observer seem monotonous and colorless landscapes. The inspired flash of description clings in the mind and gives an unforgettable impression of landscape or architectural beauty. In Alsace he saw everywhere the red-tiled roofs, the pink sandstone of the Vosges, sharply contrasted against the green foliage of lush summer or the golden light of the declining sun. In the heart of France, as indeed also in Alsace, he sees, especially, architectural delights which are unknown to the guidebook and the multitude.

In fact, it is with the eye of an architect that Monsieur Hallays has traveled through the outer suburbs of Paris, to write the essays which are included in this book. Everywhere he is impressed by the marvelous perfection of French architectural styles at their best, as he has found them in the regions which he traversed. He makes us see new beauty in churches and châteaux which we might pass with a casual glance had not his illuminating vision and description marked that which we might see and wonder at.

The architectural settings, however, much as they may appeal to his professional eye, are but the beautiful frames in which to set a multitude of charming portraits of French worthies, from the most famous to the most obscure. He knows his French literature, and more particularly the memoirs and the letters which shed so vital a light on men and motives. He has resurrected more than one character from obscurity and forgetfulness. His pathetic picture of Bosc, the lover of nature, choosing his grave in the woods which he loved so well, in defiance of the immemorial custom of his race, will seem perhaps more unusual to the European mind than to the American, for the New England pioneer of necessity made his own family graveyard in the most accessible spot, and these little plots on farms and in woods dot American soil. His portrait of the mystic Martin of Gallardon is particularly timely in this era of revival of interest in psychical research.

Written, as these essays were, through a series of years, his descriptions of Soissons and the valley of the Oise tell us of since-devastated regions as they were before the whirlwind and havoc of war swept over heroic France. Doubtless the visitor today would find but a memory of some of the architectural beauties here described.

Their memories are imperishable, and not the least of the merits of the book is that the guns of the Hun cannot destroy the written records of this beauty, though they may have blasted from the earth the stones and mortar which composed those sacred edifices.

**FRANK ROY FRAPRIE.**

*Boston, June 23, 1920.*

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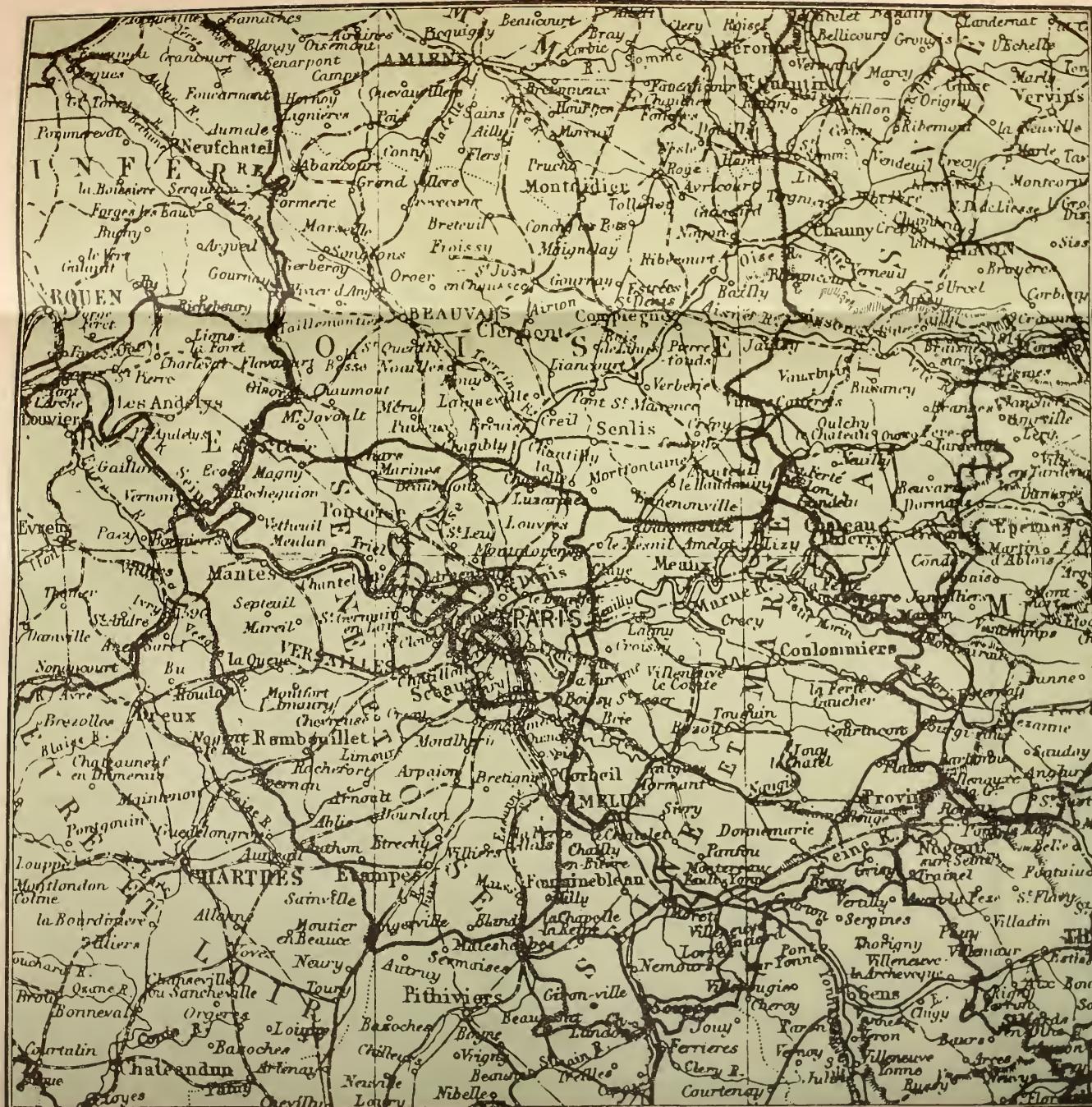
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LEAVES OF FRANCE





THE HEART OF FRANCE



1957

# *The SPELL of the HEART of FRANCE*

## I

### MAINTENON

THERE is in *L' Education Sentimentale* a brief dialogue which recurs to my memory whenever I enter a historic home.

Frédéric and Rosanette were visiting the château of Fontainebleau. As they stood before the portrait of Diane de Poitiers as Diana of the Nether World, Frédéric "looked tenderly at Rosanette and asked her if she would not like to have been this woman."

" 'What woman?'

" 'Diane de Poitiers!'

"He repeated: 'Diane de Poitiers, the mistress of Henry II.'

"She answered with a little, 'Ah!' That was all.

"Her silence proved clearly that she knew nothing and did not understand, so to relieve her embarrassment he said to her,

“ ‘Perhaps you are tired?’

“ ‘No, no, on the contrary!’

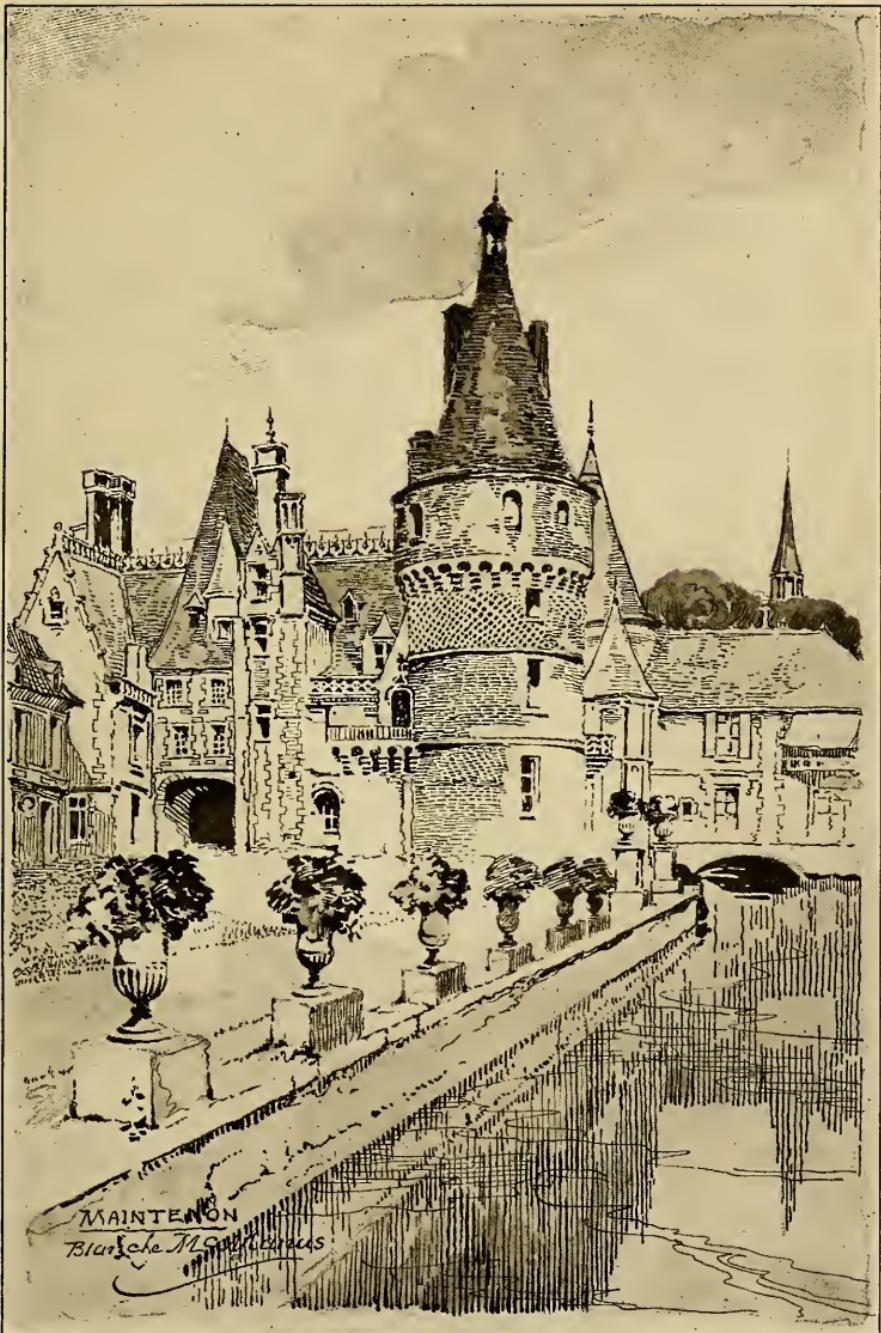
“And, with her chin raised, casting the vaguest of glances around her, Rosanette uttered this remark:

“ *That brings back memories!*”

“There could be perceived on her countenance, however, an effort, an intention of respect. . . .”

*That brings back memories.* Rosanette does not know exactly what they are. But her formula translates — and with what sincerity! — the charm of old châteaux and old gardens about which floats the odor of past centuries. She “yawns immoderately” while breathing this vague perfume, because she is unfamiliar with literature. Nevertheless, she instinctively feels and respects the melancholy and distinguished reveries of those who know the history of France. And besides, if these latter in their turn desired to express the pleasure which they feel in visiting historic places, I would defy them to find any other words than those which Rosanette herself uses.

This pleasure is one of the most lively which can be felt by a loiterer who loves the past, but whose listless imagination requires, to set it in motion, the vision of old architecture and the suggestion of landscapes. It is also one of those



From a drawing by Blanche McManus

### CHÂTEAU OF MAINTENON



which can most easily be experienced. The soil of France is so impregnated with history! Everywhere, "that brings back memories."

It is, therefore, to seek "memories" that I visited Maintenon and its park on a clear and limpid October afternoon. I had previously read once more the correspondence of Madame de Maintenon and run through a few letters of Madame de Sévigné. My memory is somewhat less untrained than that of Rosanette. But, nevertheless, I am startled, on the day when I wish to *learn again*, to perceive how many things I have unlearned, if I ever knew them.

\* \* \* \* \*

The château of Maintenon dates from the sixteenth century. Since then it has been continued and enlarged without rigorous following of the original plan. It is built of stone and brick, worked and chiseled like the jewels of the French Renaissance. Its two unsymmetrical wings terminate, the one in a great donjon of stone, the other in a round tower of brick. Some parts have been restored, others have preserved their aspect of ancientness. . . . But here, as everywhere else, time has performed its harmonizing work, and what the centuries have not yet finished, the soft October light succeeds in completing. Diversity of styles, discordances between different parts of

the construction, bizarre and broken lines traced against the sky by the inequalities of the roofs, the turrets, the towers and the donjon, neither disconcert nor shock us. All these things fuse into a robust and elegant whole. The very contrasts, born of chance, appear like the premeditated fancy of an artist who conceived a work at once imposing and graceful. The artist is the autumn sun.

Before the château extends a great park which also offers singular contrasts. Near the building are stiff parterres in the French style. Beyond, a long canal, straight and narrow, between two grassy banks, is pure Le Nôtre. But, on both sides of the canal, these stiff designs disappear and are replaced by vast meadows, fat and humid, sown with admirable clumps of trees; Le Nôtre never passed here. Nature and the seventeenth century are now reconciled, and the park of Maintenon presents that seductiveness common to so many old French parks which are ennobled by their majestic remnants of the art of Versailles.

Its unusual beauty springs from the ruined aqueduct which crosses its whole width. These immense arcades, half crumbled to ruin, clothed with ivy and Virginia creeper, give a solemn melancholy to the spot. They are the remains of the aqueduct which Louis XIV started to con-

struct, to bring to Versailles the waters of the Eure, a gigantic enterprise which was one of the most disastrous of his reign. The gangs employed in this work were decimated by terrible epidemics caused by the effluvia of the broken soil. It is said that ten thousand men there met their death and fifty million francs were wasted. War in 1688 interrupted these works, "which," says Saint-Simon, "have not since been resumed; there remain of them only shapeless monuments which will make eternal the memory of this cruel folly." And, in 1687, Racine, visiting at Maintenon, described to Boileau these arcades as "built for eternity!" In the eighteenth century, the architects who were commissioned to construct the château of Crécy for Madame de Pompadour came to seek materials in the ancient domain of Madame de Maintenon. . . . These different memories are an excellent theme for meditation upon the banks of the grand canal, in whose motionless waters is reflected this prodigious romantic decoration.

Within the château, we are allowed to visit the oratory, in which are collected some elegant wood carvings of the sixteenth century; the king's chamber, which contains some paintings of the seventeenth century; a charming portrait of Madame de Maintenon in her youth and another

of Madame de Thianges, the sister of Madame de Montespan; and lastly, the apartment of Madame de Maintenon.

What is called the apartment of Madame de Maintenon consists of two narrow chambers, containing furniture of the seventeenth century; I know not if these are originals or copies. Two portraits attract our attention, one of Madame de Maintenon, the other of Charles X.

The portrait of Madame de Maintenon is a copy of that by Mignard in the Louvre. "She is dressed in the costume of the Third Order of St. Francis; Mignard has embellished her; but it lacks insipidity, flesh color, whiteness, the air of youth; and without all these perfections it shows us a face and an expression surpassing all that one can describe; eyes full of animation, perfect grace, no finery and, with all this, no portrait surpasses his." (Letter from Madame de Coulanges to Madame de Sévigné, October 26, 1694.) Madame de Coulanges does not consider as finery the mantle of ermine, the royal mantle thrown over the shoulders of the Franciscan sister. Louis XIV had required this of the painter, and it was one of the rare occasions on which he almost officially admitted the mysterious marriage. This portrait, in truth, is one of the best works of Mignard. But, even without



LOUIS XIV.



the witness of Madame de Coulanges, we would not have doubted that the artist had embellished his model. In 1694, Madame de Maintenon was fifty-nine.

As to the portrait of Charles X, it is placed here to call to memory the fact that in 1830 the last of the Bourbons, flying from Rambouillet, came hither, "in the midst of the dismal column which was scarcely lighted by the veiled moon" (Chateaubriand), and that he found asylum for a night in the chamber of Madame de Maintenon.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was on December 27, 1674, that Madame Scarron became owner of the château, and the domain of Maintenon, for the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand livres. Louis XIV gave her this present in recognition of the care which she had given for five years to the children of Madame de Montespan. At this time the mission of the governess, at first secret, had become a sort of official charge. The illegitimate offspring had been acknowledged in 1673. Madame Scarron had then left the mysterious house in which she dwelt "at the very end of the Faubourg Saint-Germain . . . quite near Vaugirard." She appeared at court. But she had calculated the danger of her position; she dreamt of putting

herself out of reach of changes of fortune and of acquiring an “establishment.”

The letters which she then addressed to her spiritual director, Abbé Gobelin, were full of the tale of her fears and her sorrows. She desired a piece of property to which she could retire to lead the life of solitude and devotion, to which she then aspired. She finally obtained from Madame de Montespan and the King the gift of Maintenon, and, two months later, she wrote to her friend, Madame de Coulanges, her first impressions as a landed proprietor:

“I am more impatient to give you news of Maintenon than you are to hear them. I have been here two days which seemed only a moment; my heart is fixed here. Do you not find it admirable that at my age I should attach myself to these things like a child? The house is very beautiful: a little too large for the way I propose to run it. It has very beautiful surroundings, woodlands where Madame de Sévigné might dream of Madame de Grignan very comfortably. I would like to live here; but the time for that has not yet arrived.”

It never came. Madame de Maintenon — the King had given this name to Scarron’s widow — remained at court to carry out her great purpose: the conversion of Louis XIV. Not that this

project was then clearly formed in her mind. But, little by little, she saw her favor increase, the King detach himself from Madame de Montespan, and all things work together to assure her victory, which was to be that of God. So it was necessary for her to abandon her project of living in retirement, and to remain at Versailles upon the field of battle. She had hours of weariness and sadness; but, sustained by pride and devotion, she always returned to this court life, which, as La Bruyère expresses it, is a “serious and melancholy game which requires application.”

At first it was necessary that she should struggle against the caprices, the angers and the jealousies of Madame de Montespan; for a profound aversion separated the two women. “It is a bitterness,” says Madame de Sévigné, “it is an antipathy, they are as far apart as white is from black. You ask what causes that? It is because the friend (Madame de Maintenon) has a pride which makes her revolt against the other’s orders. She does not like to obey. She will mind father, but not mother.” At one time, the preaching of Bourdaloue and the imprecations of Bossuet had determined the King to break with Madame de Montespan (during Lent of 1675), and, before departing for the campaign in Flanders, Louis XIV had bidden farewell to the favorite in a

glazed room, under the eyes of the whole court. But when the King returned the work of the bigots was in vain. Madame de Montespan regained her ascendancy. "What triumph at Versailles! What redoubled pride! What a solid establishment! What a Duchess of Valentinois! What a relish, even because of distractions and absence! What a retaking of possession!" (No one has expressed like Madame de Sévigné the dramatic aspect of these spectacles of the court.) After this dazzling reëntry into favor, every one expected to see the position of Madame de Maintenon become less favorable. But she had patience and talent. Her moderation and good sense charmed the King, who wearied of the passionate outbursts of his mistress and who was soon to be troubled by the frightful revelations of the La Voisin affair. It is true that the Montespan was succeeded by a new favorite, Mlle. de Fontanges. But she was "as beautiful as an angel and as foolish as a basket." She was little to be feared; her reign was soon over. And Madame de Maintenon continued to make the King acquainted with "a new country which was unknown to him, which is the commerce of friendship and conversation, without constraint and without evasion." But how many efforts and cares there still were before the day of defi-



MADAME DE MONTESPAN



nite triumph, that is, until the secret marriage!

In going through her correspondence, we find very few letters dated from Maintenon. During the ten years which it took her to conquer and fix the King's affection, she made only rare and brief visits to her château. It is true that Louis XIV had commissioned Le Nôtre "to adjust this beautiful and ugly property." The domain had been increased by new acquisitions. But her position as governess, and later when she was lady of the bed-chamber to the Dauphiness, the wishes of Louis XIV kept Madame de Maintenon at court.

The only time when she remained several months at Maintenon seems to have been in the spring of 1779; Madame de Montespan, whom the King was neglecting at the moment for Mlle. de Ludres, had come to beg shelter of the friend of her friend, in order to be delivered under her roof of her sixth child, Mlle. de Blois. This memory has a special value, if we wish to become well acquainted with the characteristic morality of the seventeenth century. Observe, in fact, that this child was adulterous on both sides; that Madame de Montespan, abandoned, could only hate Madame de Maintenon, more in favor than ever; that, five years later, Madame de Maintenon was to marry Louis XIV, and finally that, in spite of this curious complaisance, Madame

de Maintenon had none the less the most sure and vigilant conscience in regard to everything which touched on honor. . . . It is most likely that others will discover some day terrible indelicacies in acts which we today think very innocent. There is an evolution in casuistry.

From the epoch of the foundation of Saint Cyr, Madame de Maintenon had less time than ever for her property. She lived her life elsewhere, divided between the King and the House of St. Louis. When her niece married the Duke of Ayen she gave her Maintenon, but reserved the income for herself but it was to St. Cyr that she retired and there she died.

\* \* \* \* \*

Under the great trees of the park, where the verdure is already touched with pale gold, in the long avenue which is called the Alley of Racine, because the poet is supposed to have planned *Athalie* there (I do not know if tradition speaks the truth), I recall that letter to Madame de Coulanges which I transcribed a little way back. "My heart is fixed here," said Madame de Maintenon. But, the more I think of it the less it seems to me that her heart was ever capable of becoming attached to the beauty of things. The "very beautiful surroundings" of Maintenon pleased her because this château was the proof

of the King's favor, because, after the miseries of her childhood, after the years of trials and anxieties, she finally felt that her "establishment" was a fact. But there is something like an accent of irony in her way of vaunting the "woodlands where Madame de Sévigné *might dream* of Madame de Grignan very comfortably," for there never was a woman who dreamed less and scorned dreaming more than this beautiful tutoress, possessed of good sense, sound reason and a poor imagination.

She was very beautiful and remained so even to an advanced age. She was about fifty when the Ladies of Saint Cyr drew this marvelous portrait of her: "She had a voice of the most agreeable quality, an affectionate tone, an open and smiling countenance, the most natural gestures of the most beautiful hands, eyes of fire, such affectionate and regular motions of a free figure that she outshone the most beautiful women of the court. . . . Her first glance was imposing and seemed to conceal severity. . . . Her smile and her voice opened the cloud. . . ." (This is better than all the Mignards.) Her conversation was delightful: Madame de Sévigné bears witness to it, and that at a time when her testimony cannot be questioned, since nothing could then cause her to foresee the prodigious

destiny of Madame Scarron. She had a sovereign grace in her apparel, although the material of her clothing was always of extreme simplicity; and this amazed her confessor, the excellent and respectful Abbé Gobelin, who said to her: "When you kneel before me I see a mass of drapery falling at my feet with you, which is so graceful that I find it almost too much for me."

She knew that she was irresistibly beautiful, and her confessor had assuredly taught her nothing by telling her that her commonest robes fell into folds about her with royal elegance. There was no coquettishness in her.

No one today can have any doubt of her integrity and her virtue. Bussy-Rabutin has certified this and he was not accustomed to give such a brevet without good reasons. But, to refute the calumnies of Saint-Simon, nothing more is required than to read the letters of Madame de Maintenon. They have a turn and an accent which cannot deceive.

The whole rule of her conduct was double. She was virtuous from devotion and from care for her reputation. The second sentiment was certainly much more important to her than the first. She has herself confessed it: "I would like to have done for God all that I have done in the world to keep my reputation."



MADAME DE MAINTENON AND THE DUCHESS OF BURGUNDY



"I wanted to be somebody of importance," she said. This explains everything: her ambition, her prudence, her moderation and her scruples. She cares little for the advantages which her high position could give her; she seeks neither titles, nor honors, nor donations. She wishes for the approbation of honest men; she desires "*good glory, bonne gloire,*" as Fénelon has expressed it. We find in her, mingled in proportions which it is impossible to measure, a passion for honor quite in the manner of Corneille, and a much less noble apprehension of what people will say about her. But if this is truly her character — and, when we have read her letters, it is impossible to retain a doubt on this point — she is incapable of the weaknesses of which she has been accused. "I have a desire to please and to be well thought of, which puts me on my guard against all my passions." That is truth itself, and good psychology. But even more fine and more penetrating appears to me the remark once made about Madame de Maintenon by a woman of intellect: "This is what has passed through my mind . . . and has made me believe that all the evil they have said about her is quite false: it is that if she had had something to reproach herself about in regard to her morals, if she had had ~~weaknesses~~ of a certain kind, she would have had

to fight less against vainglory. Humility would have been as natural to her as it was foreign to her, I mean in the bottom of her heart; for externally every appearance denied that secret pride of which she complains to her spiritual director. It was therefore necessary that this should have been a secret esteem for herself. Now how could she esteem herself, with the uprightness which was part of her, if she had not known herself to be estimable, she who in her conversations paints so well those whose reputation has been tarnished by evil conduct. . . . I do not know if my thought is good; but it has pleased me." Thus in the eighteenth century, Madame de Louvigny wrote to La Beaumelle, the first historian of Madame de Maintenon. The analysis is just and delicate.

One of the grievances of Saint-Simon against Madame de Maintenon is the manner in which she used her credit to displace certain prelates of noble birth, preferring to them "the crass ignorance of the Sulpicians, their supreme platitude . . . the filthy beards of Saint-Sulpice." Chance has brought to my notice a copy of the letters of Madame de Maintenon which belonged to Scherer and which he annotated when reading it. I find there this remark penciled upon a page: "Neither Jesuit, nor Jansenist, but Sulpician." It is impossible to give a better definition of the devotion of

Madame de Maintenon. She had the reasonable piety which is the mark of Saint Sulpice. From her family and from her infancy she had preserved a sort of remnant of Calvinism: she did not like the mass and was pleased with psalm singing. This was to estrange her from the Jesuits. On the other hand, Jansenism had an air of independence, almost of revolt, which must have displeased her intelligence, with its love of order. She was wisely and irreproachably orthodox. Her grave, tranquil, active piety reveals a conscience without storms and an imagination without fever.

Thus she had great pride and little vanity, great devotion and little fervor. She had much common sense in everything. She loved her glory passionately and her God seriously. She was charitable, as was enjoined by the religion which she practiced with a submissive heart. But we know neither a movement of sensitiveness nor an outburst of tenderness in her life. She had a very lofty soul, a very clear intelligence, a very rigid will. She was desperately dry.

Did this Sulpician, spiritual, cold and ambitious, ever feel the charm of the great trees of her park? I doubt it.

## II

### LA FERTÉ-MILON

RACINE was about twelve years old when he left La Ferté-Milon, to go first to the college of Beauvais and later to Port-Royal des Champs. He passed his infancy there in the house of his paternal grandmother, Marie des Moulins, the wife of Jean Racine, controller of the salt warehouse; he was thirteen months old when his mother died and three years old at the death of his father. Of these early years we know nothing except that the grandmother loved the orphan more than any of her own children, an affection of which Racine retained the most tender memory.

He later often returned to the town of his birth, where his sister Marie had remained and had married Antoine Rivière. The two families remained united; Racine handled the interests of his brother-in-law at Paris; the Rivières sent Racine skylarks and cheeses; and when Racine's children were ill, they were sent to their aunt to be cared for in the open air. And these were



JEAN RACINE



almost all the bonds between Racine and La Ferté-Milon.

It is therefore probable that almost nothing at La Ferté-Milon today will awaken reminiscences of the poet. However, let us seek.

At the exit from the station a long street, a sort of *faubourg* of low houses, with their naïve signs swinging in the wind, leads us to the bridge across the Ourcq. On the opposite bank, the little old town with its little old houses clammers up the abrupt slope of a hill which is crowned by the formidable ruin of the stronghold. Here and there, at the water's edge are remnants of walls, towers and terraced gardens, which, with the meadows and the poplars of the valley, compose a ravishing landscape.

Once across the bridge, behold Racine. It is a statue by David d'Angers. It is backed by the mayoralty and surrounded by a portico. Racine wears a great wig, which is not surprising; but, notwithstanding his great wig, he is half naked, holding up with his hand a cloth which surrounds his body and forms "harmonious" folds. It is Racine at the bath. Near him stands a cippus, on which are inscribed the names of his dramatic works, from *Athalie* to *Les frères ennemis*, the title of which latter is half concealed by the inevitable laurels.

While I was contemplating this academic but ridiculous image, a peasant, carrying a basket on his arm, approached me and delivered the following discourse: "This is Jean Racine, born in 1639, died in 1699. And you read upon this marble the list of his dramatic works. He was born at La Ferté-Milon and I have at home parchments where one may see the names of the persons of his family; I possess also his baptismal font. I am, so to speak, the keeper of the archives of La Ferté. . . . The *Comédie française* will come here April 23. . . . Racine had two boys and five girls. . . . There was a swan in his coat of arms; the swan is the symbol of purity. Fénelon, Bishop of Cambrai, has been compared to a swan. Fénelon, born in 1651 and dead in 1715, is the author of *Télémaque* and of the *Maximes des Saints*. This last work embroiled him with Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, in Latin Jacobus Benignus, Bishop of Meaux, who wrote *Oraisons funèbres* and the *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, which he was unfortunately unable to finish. . . . My name is Bourgeois Parent, and here is my address. And you, what is your name? You would not belong to the *Comédie française?*" All this uttered in the voice of a scholar who has learned his lesson by heart, with sly and crafty winks. . . . I thank this bystander for his

erudition; I admit humbly that I do not belong to the *Comédie française* and I take leave, not without difficulty, of this extraordinary "Racinian," who truly has the genius of transition, in the manner of Petit-Jean.

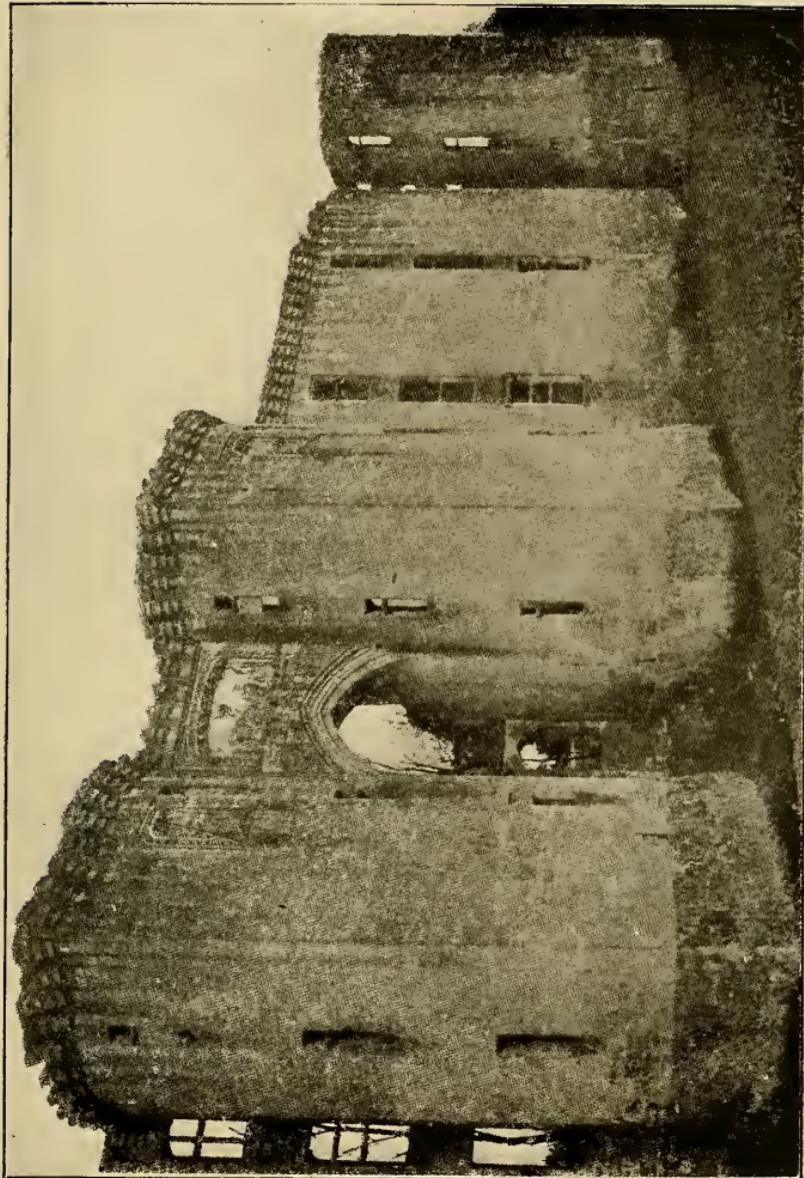
In what house was Racine born? The accepted tradition is that his mother was brought to bed at No. 3, Rue de la Pescherie (now Rue Saint-Vaast); in this house lived the Sconin couple, the father and mother of Madame Racine. The old house has been demolished, and there remains of it nothing more than a pretty medal-lion of stone which represents the *Judgment of Paris*. This is inserted above a door in the garden of the new house. But, in the same street, there stands another house (No. 14) which belonged to the paternal grandparents of Jean Racine; it is here, according to other conjectures, that the author of *Athalie* was born. And these two houses are not the only ones at La Ferté which dispute the honor of having seen the birth of Racine. . . . I will not get mixed up in the search for the truth. I have heard that the people of Montauban recently had recourse to an ingenious means of ending a quarrel of the same kind. No one knew in which house Ingres had been born; a furious controversy had arisen between various proprietors of real estate. It was

ended by a referendum. Universal suffrage gave its decision. Now the question is decided, irreversibly.

There is another monument to the poet. Behind the apse of the church, in a little square, on top of a column, is perched an old bust more or less roughly repaired; at its foot has been placed a tawdry cast-iron hydrant. This is called the Racine Fountain. Decidedly La Ferté is a poor place of pilgrimage: few relics, and the images of the saint are not beautiful!

Fortunately, to recompense the pilgrim, there are in the two churches precious stained glass windows of the sixteenth century; those of Notre Dame, despite grievous restorations, are brilliant in coloring and free in design. The *Saint Hubert* is a good picture of almost Germanic precision, and, above the right-hand altar, the portraits of the donors and their children are natural and graceful. Above all, there is the admirable façade of the old castle of Louis of Orleans, an enormous crenelated fortress, flanked with towers, whose naked grandeur is set off by sculptures, marvelous but mutilated, alas! There are statues of armed champions framed in elegant foliage, and, above the arch of the great door, the celebrated *Coronation of the Virgin*, one of the masterpieces of French sculpture; a cast of it can be studied

CHÂTEAU OF LA FERTÉ-MILON





at the Trocadero, and there we can admire at full leisure the truth of the attitudes and the freedom of the draperies. But no one can imagine the beauty of this composition, unless he has seen it relieved against and shining from the ferocious wall of the citadel, colored with the golden green of mosses, while tufts of yellow wallflowers, growing among the delicate carvings of the wide frame, give an exquisite sumptuousness to the whole decoration.

Returning to the terrace on the other side of the castle, which dominates the houses, the towers and the gardens of the village, I find myself before the framework of a great tent which is being erected for the approaching performance by the *Comédie française*, and find myself brought back from the Middle Ages to Racine. These juxtapositions no longer surprise us, since we are now so accustomed to ramble through history and literature as through a great second-hand store, stopping at all the curiosities which amuse our eclectic taste. I imagine, however, that a man of the seventeenth century, a contemporary of Racine, would have been stupefied to think that any one could enjoy the verses of *Bérénice* and at the same time be sensitive to the charm of the old Gothic images, carved upon the wall of this "barbarous" donjon. Time has done its work;

it has effaced the prejudices of centuries; it has allowed us to perceive that the sculptor of the *Coronation of the Virgin* and the poet who wrote *Bérénice* were, after all, sons of the same race and servants of the same ideal. No, this is not a vain dream; there is something Racinian in the statues of La Ferté-Milon. They possess purity, nobility and elegance. Has not this Virgin, kneeling before the throne of the Lord, while two angels ceremoniously hold up the train of her royal mantle, has she not, I say, the attitude and the touching grace of Racine's Esther at the feet of Ahasuerus?

At the edge of this terrace, I have before me the delightful landscape of the little hills of the Ourcq valley, and, as I contemplate the soft and beautiful undulations covered by the forest of Retz, I am more and more struck by the harmony of this charming spot.

I think of the pages which Taine placed at the beginning of his essay on La Fontaine, in which he discovers in the French landscape the very qualities of the Gallic mind. You remember this picture of the land of Champagne: "The mountains had become hills; the woods were no longer more than groves. . . . Little brooks wound among bunches of alders with gracious smiles. . . . All is medium-sized here, tempered, inclined

rather toward delicacy than toward strength." How exact all this is! There is a perfect concordance between the genius of La Fontaine and the aspect of the country of his birth. In the valley of the Marne, if we follow one of those long highways which stretch, straight and white, between two ranks of trembling poplars, it seems unnatural not to see the animals leave the fields and come to talk to us upon the roadway.

These French landscapes have still another sort of beauty, and, in the country of Racine, this beauty is more striking than elsewhere; its design has an incomparable grace and nobleness. The lines of the different planes intermingle without ever breaking one another. The undulations unfold with a caressing, almost musical, slowness. These hillocks which surround La Ferté-Milon have, in truth, the sweetness of a verse of *Bérénice*. They have the flexibility of rhythm of a chorus from *Esther*:

Just as a docile brook  
Obeys the hand which turns aside its course,  
And, allowing the aid of its waters to be divided,  
    Renders a whole field fertile;  
Oh, God, Thou sovereign master of our wills,  
The hearts of kings lie thus within Thy hand.

We must repeat these verses upon the terrace of La Ferté-Milon, at the foot of which the Ourcq ramifies among the gardens and the meadows; and we must follow upon the horizon the elegant

sinuosity of the low hills, to appreciate the mysterious and subtle harmony which was established for life between the imagination of Racine and the sweet countryside of his infancy.

I did not wish to leave the town of Racine without following the Faubourg de Saint-Vaast up to the wooded hillside where the Jansenists who took refuge at La Ferté-Milon often came to pray. In 1638, the recluses of Port-Royal had been dispersed; Lancelot had taken refuge at La Ferté-Milon, with the parents of one of his pupils, Nicolas Vitart (the Vitarts were relatives of the Racines); then M. Antoine Le Maître and M. de Sericourt had come to join him. They long led a life of complete seclusion in the little house of the Vitarts; but in the summer of 1639 they sometimes decided to go out after supper. Then they went into the neighboring wood, "upon the mountain," which overlooks the town, and there they conversed of *good things*. They never spoke to anybody; but when they returned at nine o'clock, walking in single file and telling their beads, the townsfolk, seated before their doors, rose in respect and kept silence as they passed. (It is still easy to imagine this admirable scene in the little streets of La Ferté; the architecture has changed so little!) The *good odor*, as Lancelot calls it, which was spread by the three

Jansenists, remained as a living influence in the little town. And this sojourn of the hermits brought Port-Royal near to the Racine family. The sister of the poet's grandmother was already cellaress at the abbey; his aunt will later take the veil; his grandmother will end her life at Port-Royal des Champs; and the young Jean Racine (he entered the world only after the hermits had departed) will have for masters Lancelot, Le Maître and Hamon. . . . Later he will make a scandal at Port-Royal; he will rally his masters. But, in spite of this, their lessons will remain ineffaceable; and the author of the *Cantiques spirituelles* will desire to be buried at the foot of Hamon's grave. On what did the destiny of the poet depend? Perhaps *Esther* and *Athalie* would never have been written if these three hermits, fleeing from persecution, had not come one day to "Jansenize" La Ferté and to converse about *good things* upon the "Mountain," as they called this pretty hillock of the Valois, with its soft and shadowy slopes.

### III

#### MEAUX AND GERMIGNY

WHILE the glacial downpours of this endless winter continue, I find pleasure in running over and completing the notes collected in the course of a stroll which I undertook on a warm and charming day last autumn. In weather as bad as this one can ramble only in memory, unless desirous of catching influenza.

\*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*

I went to Meaux and to Germigny-l'Évêque to discover, either at the episcopal residence or in Bossuet's country house, whatever may still recall the memory of the "Eagle."

To tell the truth, it was not the "Eagle" who interested me on that day, but the man himself. I had recently read the remarkable portrait which forms the close of the beautiful study of M. Rebelliau, those pages which are so vivid and in which is sketched with so much relief and truth the figure "of an everyday Bossuet, *sweet and simple.*" (Note 1.) It seemed to me that nowhere could



JACQUES BÉNIGNE BOSSUET



this Bossuet be better evoked than in the garden of the bishop's house at Meaux and in the park of Germigny. "*In Germiniaco nostro,*" we read at the end of the Latin letters of "M. de Meaux."

I recalled, besides, with what surprise I had read the *Mémoires* of Abbé Le Dieu, those notes, sometimes puerile, but so touching in their familiar simplicity, which reveal to us a Bossuet very different from that of Bausset. This cardinal, although he composed his book from the manuscripts of Abbé Le Dieu, could not resign himself to the simplicity of the faithful secretary. He has doubtless collected everything; he has said everything; but he has thought it his duty to ascribe to his model a continuous majesty and an inexhaustible pride. He has drawn the Bossuet of Rigaud's portrait.

Shall we cite an example of the way in which Cardinal de Bausset transposes the descriptions of Abbé Le Dieu? Bossuet invited his priests to say the mass quickly: "*It is necessary to go roundly,* for fear of tiring the people." This is the phrase reported by Abbé Le Dieu. And this is how Cardinal de Bausset translates the expression to make it more suitable to the gravity of the author of the *Oraisons funèbres*: "It is necessary to perform all the ceremonies with dignity," said Bossuet, "but with suitable speed. It is not necessary to

tire the people.” A simple shading; but a characteristic trait is effaced.

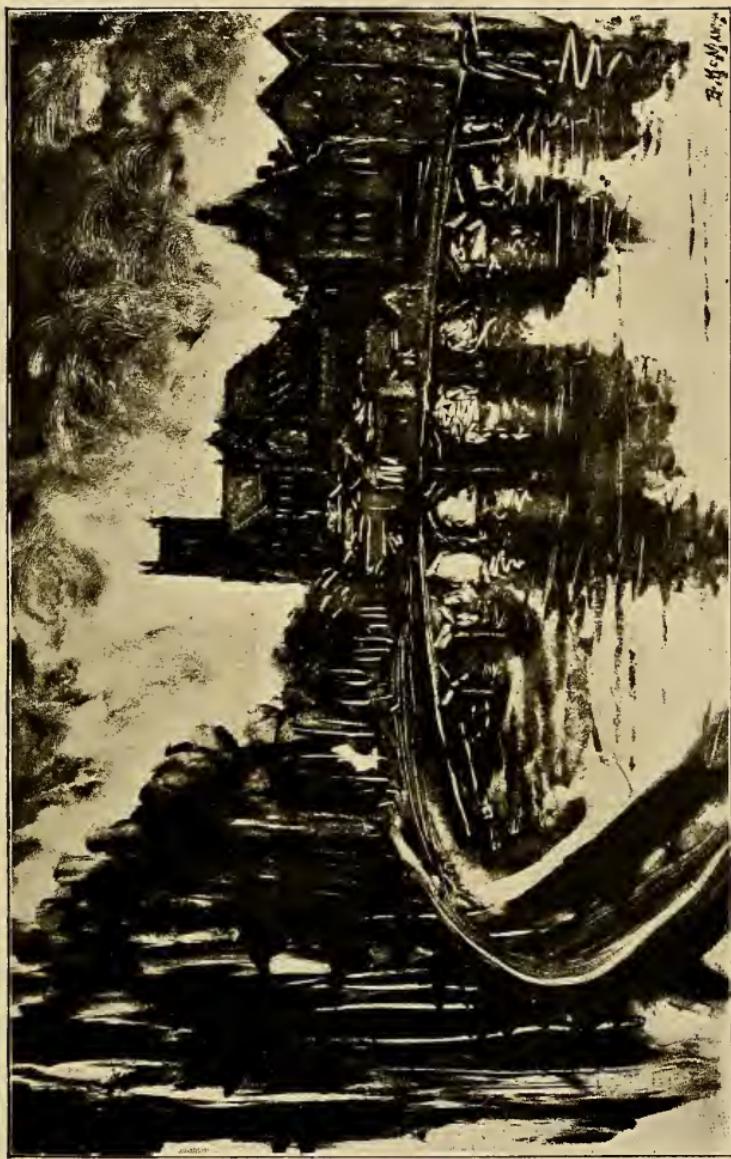
\* \* \* \* \*

I commenced my pilgrimage by a visit to the cathedral of Meaux.

“He had taken possession of the bishopric of Meaux on Sunday, February 8, 1682, and, on Ash Wednesday in the following week, preaching in his cathedral to signalize the beginning of Lent, he declared that he would devote himself entirely to his flock and would consecrate all his talents to their instruction. He promised to preach on every occasion when he should pontificate; and that no business, however pressing, should ever prevent him from coming to celebrate the high feasts with his people and to preach the word of God to them. He never failed in this, not even to exercise his office of Grand Almoner. He took leave of the princesses to whom he had been attached with much respect, and left to others the charge of administering Holy Communion to them on the high feasts.” (*Mémoires* of Abbé Le Dieu, Volume I, page 182.)

The pulpit from which Bossuet preached so many sermons no longer exists. Its panels have been found and reassembled to form a new pulpit.

Otherwise, in this beautiful Gothic cathedral there is nothing to arouse the emotions or to



From a drawing by Blanche McManus

CATHEDRAL OF MEAUX



speak to the imagination. Externally and internally, all has been "freshly restored." The soul of the past has departed from it.

There is soon to be placed under the roof of the church a commemorative monument which was recently exhibited in the Grand Palace, in the midst of an amusing crowd of statues. I was told that the authorities have not yet selected the place which this monument will occupy in the cathedral. How admirable! The monument has been conceived and executed for an undetermined position! This formidable pile of sculpture has been treated like a simple mantelpiece ornament. . . . But let us pass; this does not concern in the least the memory of Bossuet.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the bishopry, the episcopal apartments are on the second floor. Bossuet did not live there very much. He voluntarily gave up the house to his nephews and his niece, Madame Bossuet. His family had undertaken the management of the household; he was a spendthrift and gave little attention to the cares of daily life, devoting all his time to his formidable labors. "I would lose more than half of my mental ability," he wrote to Marshal de Bellefonds, "if I restricted myself in my household expenses."

Madame Bossuet knew how to take advantage

of this weakness of her uncle, inability to take care of his income. She had become mistress of the episcopal mansion; she led a worldly life there; she entertained; she gave suppers and concerts.

During Lent of 1704, Bossuet lay at death's door. The terrible agonies of illness had caused him to lose sleep. See what happened just outside of the room where he lay in agony: "This evening Madame Bossuet gave an entertainment to the Bishop of Troyes, Madame de La Briffe, the dowager, Madame Amelot, President Larcher, and other male and female company, to the number of eight. There was a magnificent repast for those who were fasting and those who were not, with all the noise which attends such assemblies, and yet this went on in the very antechamber of M. de Meaux and in his hearing, when he longed for sleep with the greatest inquietude." (*Mémoires* of Abbé le Dieu, Volume III, page 74.)

It is easy to understand that Bossuet did not find in such surroundings the peace and quiet necessary for his immense labors. He had to find a retreat where he could escape the sounds of feasting and conversation which filled the episcopal house.

Let us cross the garden which was once laid out by Le Nôtre. Beyond the flower beds, overlooking the ancient ramparts of the town of

Meaux, an avenue of clipped yews offers a sure and austere asylum for meditation. This was, it is said, the bishop's promenade. At the very end, upon the platform of a former bastion, a little pavilion served as his study. Its old wainscotings have disappeared, but the original division of the pavilion into two rooms has remained; one contained his bed, the other his worktable.

Here Bossuet shut himself up every evening. In the middle of the night, after sleeping four or five hours, he waked up of his own accord, for he was master of his hours of sleep. He found his desk in readiness, his armchair in position, his books piled upon chairs, his portfolio of papers, his pens, his writing pad and his lighted lamp; and he commenced to think and to write. On winter nights he buried himself to his waist in a bearskin bag. After a vigil of three hours, he said his matins and returned to slumber.

While, in the silence of the night, M. de Meaux wrote against heretics and prayed for them, armed himself for the eternal combat and worked for the welfare of the souls which were in his charge, the salons of the episcopal house were made gay by lights and violins.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bossuet remained faithfully in his diocese during the twenty-two years that he was bishop of Meaux.

But he always preferred to live in his country house at Germigny rather than in his episcopal palace.

Two leagues across a pleasant and slightly undulating country, the road crosses the Marne by a stone bridge. In the seventeenth century there was only a ferry. On the left bank appears the little village of Germigny with its few houses dotted pleasantly along the hillside. The landscape has the grace and freshness which is characteristic of the whole valley of the Marne: a horizon of tiny hills, humble and smiling, a fertile and regularly cultivated plain, an old mill lost among the willows, a line of great poplars, a sluggish, grassy rivulet, resigned to continual detours, and finally, spread over all these things, a somewhat humid light which imparts to them a delicate charm — a lovable spectacle of which the eye cannot tire, since its subtle seductiveness lies wholly in the changes of the light and the flight of the clouds.

From the twelfth century, the pleasure house of the Bishops of Meaux was at Germigny, on the banks of the Marne. Kings often stopped there when they came to hunt in the neighboring forests. Bossuet's predecessor, M. de Ligny, spent fifty thousand crowns in transforming the old house into a veritable château. The domain was sold at the time of the Revolution. But

Mgr. de Briey has bought back a part of it and has thus renewed the tradition of the former bishops of Meaux.

What remains of the old château? The park has been cut up. Of the gardens a lawn and a few alleys remain. The buildings have been ruined. A dovecote and an old turret are still standing, and the wreckers have respected the long terrace whose foot was formerly bathed by the Marne; it is today separated from the river by a highway. This is shaded by great trees, a charming place which seems to have been made especially for the meditative promenade of an orator or the relaxation of a theologian.

Bossuet loved Germigny. In his letters he often celebrated the charm of "his solitude." He even sang it in Latin in a hymn which he composed in honor of Saint Barthélemy, the patron of his parish. Every year he came to his country house to realize that dream of his youth which he had ingenuously expressed in a sermon: "What an agreeable diversion to contemplate how the works of nature advance to perfection by insensible increase! How much pleasure we can have in observing the success of the trees which we have grafted in a garden, the growth of the wheat, the flow of a river!" For he was sensitive to the spectacles of nature.

"Do you desire to see a sight worthy of your eyes? Chant with David: 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained.' Listen to the word of Jesus Christ who said to you: 'Consider the lily of the field and the flowers which pass in a day. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory and with that beautiful diadem with which his mother crowned his head, was not arrayed like one of these.' See these rich carpets with which the earth covers itself in the spring. How petty is everything in comparison with these great works of God! There we see simplicity joined with grandeur, abundance, profusion, inexhaustible riches, which were created by a word and which a word sustains. . . ."

And, in this same *Traité de la concupiscence* from which I have just extracted these lines, written with a grace almost worthy of Saint Francis, do you recall the admirable picture of a sunrise: "The sun advanced, and his approach was made known by a celestial whiteness which spread on all sides; the stars had disappeared and the moon had arisen as a crescent, of a silver hue so beautiful and so lively that the eyes were charmed by it. . . . In proportion as he approached, I saw her disappear; the feeble crescent diminished little by little; and when the sun was entirely

visible, her pale and feeble light, fading away, lost itself in that of the great luminary in which it seemed to be absorbed. . . ." Is not this the work of an attentive and passionate observer?

The numerous letters and decrees dated at Germigny show how much this retreat pleased Bossuet. His books followed him there. Labor seemed easier to him in this salubrious air and at this delicious spot. There he received, in noble and courteous fashion, the illustrious personages who came to visit him. The Great Condé, the Duc de Bourbon, the Prince de Conti, the Comte de Toulouse, the Duc de Maine, Cardinal de Noailles, Marshal de Villars, Madame de Montespan, and her sister, the Abbess of Fontevrault, were the guests of Bossuet at Germigny. In 1690, the Dauphin, on his way to the army in Germany, had wished to make his first halt at Germigny, at the home of his ancient tutor.

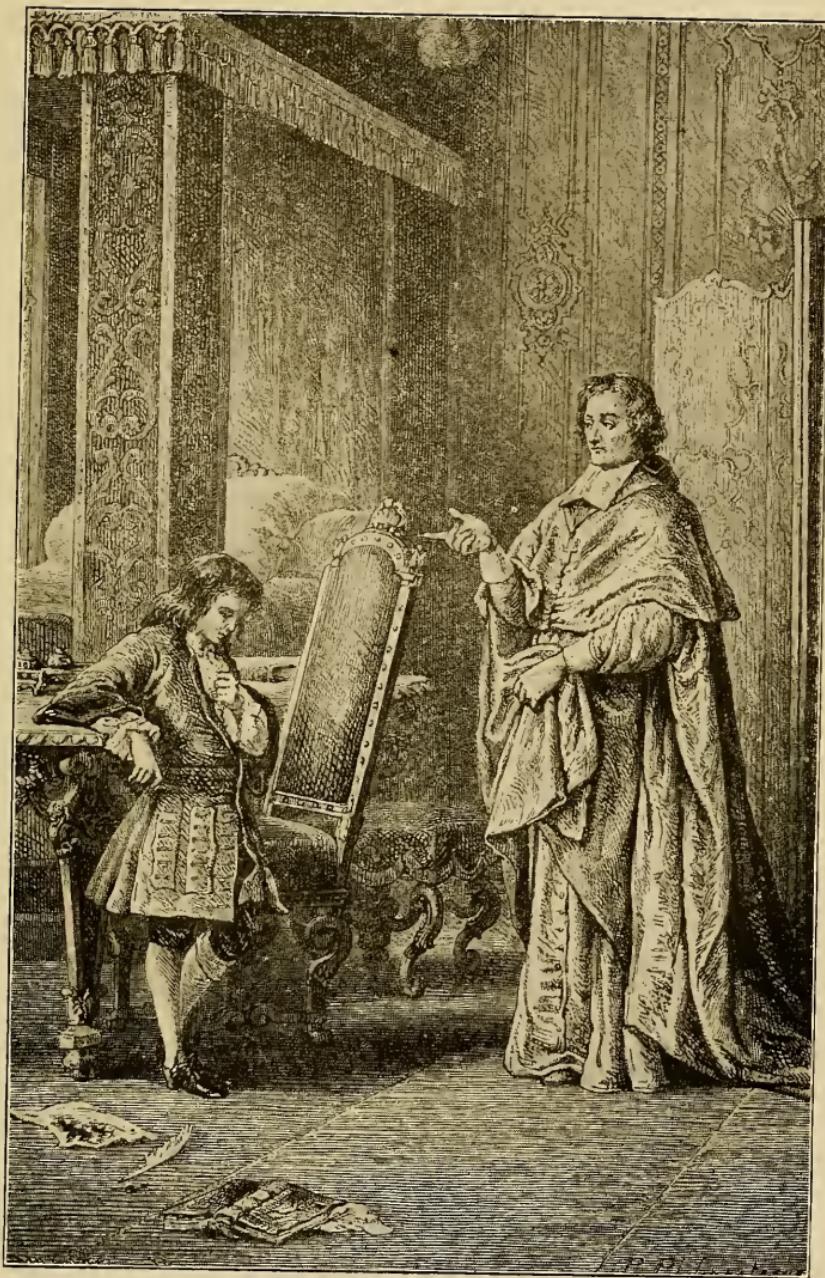
The most celebrated preachers were invited by the Archbishop of Meaux to preach at his cathedral, and were afterward entertained in his country house. It was in this way that the Abbé de Fénelon often came to Germigny. At this period the bishop and the abbé esteemed and loved each other. "When you come," the Abbé de Fénelon wrote from Versailles to the Bishop of Meaux, "you will tell us of the marvels of spring

at Germigny. Ours commences to be beautiful: if you do not wish to believe it, Monsignor, come to see it." (April 25, 1692.) And on another occasion, Fénelon sent to Bossuet verses upon his countryside which are, alas!—verses by Fénelon! Nine years later the springtimes of Germigny were forgotten. The *Maximes des Saints* had been condemned. *Télémaque* had been published; *Télémaque* which Bossuet read at this very Germigny, under the trees which had witnessed the former friendship now broken, *Télémaque* which he declared "unworthy not only of a bishop, but of a priest and of a Christian." And one day, he said to Abbé Le Dieu that Fénelon "had been a perfect hypocrite all his life. . . ."

Among the visitors at Germigny, we must not forget Malebranche, whose name was given to one of the avenues of the garden; Rigaud, who commenced in this country house the portrait of Bossuet which today may be found in the Louvre; Santeul, "the gray-haired child," who made Latin verses to describe and celebrate the château and the park of Germigny. How many verses Germigny has inspired!

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This beautiful terrace which overlooks the Marne and where so many illustrious shades surround that of "M. de Meaux," is the very



FÉNELON AND THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY



place to evoke the “sweet and simple” Bossuet! When we see that he has so many friends and know this taste for retreat and country life, the man loses at once a little of that solemnity and that inflexible arrogance which have come down in legend as characteristic of his personality.

We also seem to sustain a paradox, even after M. Brunetière, even after M. Rebelliau, in speaking today of the sweetness and the humanity of Bossuet. The entire eighteenth century labored to blacken and calumniate the victorious adversary of “sweet Fénelon.” It is not in the course of a promenade upon the banks of the Marne that I pretend to study the quarrel of quietism. Nevertheless, however little we may wish to recall the vicissitudes of the dispute, we must admit that the excess of shiftiness of the crafty Perigordian sufficiently justified the excess of hardness of the impetuous Burgundian. But, in addition, we are not dealing here with Bossuet as a polemist. The profundity as well as the ingenuousness of his faith would excuse the vehemence of his arguments, if we could permit ourselves to be scandalized by so courteous a vehemence, we who, unbelieving or Christian, cannot discuss the most insignificant problems of politics without resorting to extremes of insult. Bossuet had neither hatred nor rancor. When he recovered from the emo-

tion of the combat, he resumed his natural mood, which was all charity and sweetness.

He was nearer to the gospel than Fénelon ever was with his artistic vanity. He had in him something simple and awkward which brought him nearer to the people than to the great ones among whom he had lived. At court, he made more than one false move. In his diocese, he was loved for his goodness.

By regarding Bossuet as a persecutor, Jurieu and the philosophers in his train have obliged the historians to examine closely what the conduct of the Bishop of Meaux had been in regard to the Protestants of his diocese. Now it has appeared that, of all the prelates of France who were charged with assuring the execution of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, not one showed more humanity. Bossuet condemned violence and constraint, and there was only a single military execution in the diocese of Meaux. It would be childish to reproach a Catholic bishop of the seventeenth century for not having criticized the Revocation, of the Edict, especially since this bishop, the author of *Politique tirée de l'Écriture sainte*, should have been, more than any other, impressed by the perils which the republican spirit of the French Protestants threatened to the monarchy. He preached to the Protestants as

eloquently as he could, turned persecution aside from them, and gave alms to them. He received at Germigny a great number of ministers who had come to dispute with him; and it was in the little chapel of his château that Joseph Saurin and Jacques Bénigne Winslow abjured Protestantism beneath his hands.

All of this, I know, you can read in the biographies of Bossuet and, if you have not already done it, do not fail to read it in M. Rebelliau's book. But things have mysterious suggestiveness, and when we have seen the beautiful garden of the bishop's house at Meaux and the charming country about Germigny, we are more disposed to believe that the Bossuet of the modern historians is the true Bossuet. I have not verified their researches; but I have read Le Dieu and I have walked upon the terrace along the Marne; that is sufficient.

And I would be ungrateful if I failed to add that I had the most amiable and the best informed of guides in my promenade: the Abbé Formé, priest of Germigny, deserving of the parish of Bossuet, in all simplicity.

## IV

## SAINTE RADEGONDE

I HAD heard that, deep in the forest of Montmorency, near the hermitage of Sainte Radegonde, there might be found a little cemetery lost in the midst of the woods. I wondered who had chosen this romantic burial place. One of my friends, to whom I had imparted my curiosity, sent me a book by M. Auguste Rey, entitled *Le Naturaliste Bosc*, and assured me that I would there find enlightenment on the mystery which intrigued me. I read it, and the story told by M. Auguste Rey increased my desire to become acquainted with the cemetery of Sainte Radegonde. (Note 2.)

So, on an October afternoon, I wandered in the forest seeking tombs. The search was long and charming. As the forest of Montmorency is not provided with guideposts, it is impossible not to get lost in it. But the magnificence of the weather, the miraculous splendor of the golden and coppery foliage, the lightness of the luminous mists which float over the reddened forest, the

perfume of the softened earth and of the moist leaves, make one quickly forget the humiliation of having lost his way.

Following one path after another, I ended by stumbling upon Sainte Radegonde. The place is well known to all walkers. Of the ancient priory, which was founded here in the thirteenth century by the monks of the Abbey of Saint Victor, there is left no more than a tumbledown building which serves today as a ranger's house. It is surrounded by a wall, so that it is no longer possible to approach the well which formerly attracted numerous pilgrims to Sainte Radegonde, for this saint cured, it is said, the itch and sterility.

Before the hermitage of Sainte Radegonde (the word hermitage was made fashionable in this country by Jean Jacques Rousseau) there opens a vast glade, whose slope descends to the brooklet called Ru du Nid-de-l'Aigle, which flows in the midst of a scrub of blackberries and hawthorns. At the end of the meadow, half hidden by copses, there rises a little bluff which elbows the stream aside. Here is the cemetery. A few very simple graves surround a little boulder on which is carved: "Bosc, Member of the Institute." Four great cedars overlook them with their superb shafts.

The site possesses an inexpressible beauty, at

the hour when the forest loses the splendor with which it was but recently decked by the sun's rays, while a cold breeze shakes the half-naked branches, announcing the approaching frosts and sorrows of winter.

The scene is set. Now listen to the story, which I borrow almost entirely from the interesting study of M. Auguste Rey.

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Louis Augustin Guillaume Bosc, whose mortal remains repose in the cemetery of Sainte Radegonde, was born at Paris January 29, 1759. His family, originally from the Cevennes, belonged to the reformed religion. His father was one of the physicians of the king.

At Dijon, where he had been sent to college, he followed the courses of the naturalist Durande, became enthusiastic over the Linnæan system, and discovered his vocation. When, after returning to Paris, he was obliged by reverses of fortune to accept a very modest position in the post office, he continued the studies of his choice and took the public courses given by the professors and demonstrators of the King's Garden.

In 1780, it was proper to have a republican soul and a taste for botany. It was good form to attend the lectures of M. de Jussieu and to read Plutarch. Rousseau had made the love of flowers



LOUIS AUGUSTIN GUILLAUME BOSC



fashionable, for he had said: "While I collect plants I am not unfortunate." Madame de Genlis composed a *Moral Herbal*. Amateurs added a museum of natural history to their collection of paintings. One might then meet in the alleys of the King's Garden a great number of personages who were later to take part in the revolutionary assemblies. Bosc needed to make no effort to follow the fashion. Being a Huguenot, he was republican from birth. As to botany, he cherished it with a deep and ingenuous passion, and not as a pastime.

It was in the Botanic Garden, either at Jussieu's lectures or in André Thouin's home, that he sealed the great friendships of his life. He was, in fact, among the frequenters of the hospitable apartment where lived the four brothers Thouin, with their sisters, their wives and their daughters; this family of scientist gardeners received their friends in winter in the kitchen and in summer before the greenhouses. Celebrated men came to converse with and learn from these worthy men, who were the true masters of the King's Garden; and the "venerable" Malesherbes, seated upon a trough, often conversed with Madam Guillebert, the sister of André Thouin, for whom he had a particular esteem. (Note 3.)

Bosc at that time entered into friendship with

three future members of the Convention, from whom he had acquired the taste of studying plants: Creuzé-Latouche, Garan de Coulon and Bancal des Issarts. The first two died Senators of the Empire. As to Bancal, we will soon run across him again.

It was in the same surroundings that he met Roland, an inspector of manufactures, and his young wife, then in all the flower of her robust beauty. The husband was forty-eight; the wife was twenty-six; Bosc was twenty; naturally he fell in love. Madame Roland gave him to understand that he had nothing to hope for from her; but she mockingly added that in eighteen years it would be allowable for him to make a like declaration to her daughter Eudora. Bosc resigned himself to the situation and consented to the friendship which was offered him; but he committed the folly, later, of taking seriously the railillery with which he had been dismissed.

For ten years Bosc continued a correspondence with Madame Roland which was full of confidence and freedom. These letters no longer exist, and it is a pity; for this republican botanist seems to have possessed sensitiveness, tenderness and judgment. We do possess, however, most of the letters which were written to him by Madame Roland.

Without these letters and various others of the



MADAME ROLAND



same period, we would never have had any other means of knowing Madame Roland than the image drawn by herself in her *Memoirs*, her intolerable *Memoirs*. We would always have seen her behind the tragic mask, heroic, unapproachable and full of vanity, and we would have remained almost unconscious of the frightful tragedy of her death if she had not left us these intimate and familiar effusions, in which are revealed the heart and the mind of a woman who was truly feminine. We are very little moved by the celebrated letter which she wrote one day to Bancal, Bosc's friend, to spurn his love, although she confessed to "tumultuous sentiments" which agitated her, and to tears which obscured her vision. I know that Michelet cries: "The cuirass of the warrior opens, and it is a woman that we see, the wounded bosom of Clorinda." But we must doubt, after all, the severity of the wound which leaves Clorinda cool enough to call to witness "the absolute irreproachability" of her life. There is something theatrical in such half-avowals. On the contrary, her letters to Bosc are simple in diction and oftentimes charming. They are spontaneous: "Seated in the ingle nook, but at eleven o'clock in the morning, after a peaceful night and the different cares of the day's work, my friend (that is, Roland)

at his desk, my little girl knitting, and myself talking to one, watching over the work of the other, savoring the happiness of existing warmly in the bosom of my dear little family, writing to a friend, while the snow falls upon so many poor devils loaded down with misery and grief, I grieve over their fate; I turn back with pleasure to my own. . . ." And elsewhere: "Now, know that Eudora reads well; begins to know no other plaything than the needle; amuses herself by drawing geometrical figures; does not know what shackles clothes of any kind may be; has no idea of the price one has to pay for rags for adornment; believes herself beautiful when she is told that she is a good girl and that she has a perfectly white dress, remarkable for its cleanliness; that she finds the greatest prize in life to be a bonbon given with a kiss; that her naughty spells become rarer and shorter; that she walks through the darkness as in the daylight, fears nothing and has no idea that it is worth while to tell a lie about anything; add that she is five years and six weeks old; that I am not aware that she has false ideas on any subject, that is important at least; and agree that, if her stiffness has fatigued me, if her fancies have worried me, if her carelessness has made it more difficult for us to influence her, we have not entirely lost our pains. . . ." And it would be

possible to quote twenty other passages written with the same grace and the same simplicity. . . .

As for the young friend to whom were addressed these nice letters, here is his portrait: "As for you, whom I see even at this distance talking quickly, going like lightning, with an air sometimes sensible and sometimes heedless, but never imposing when you try to be grave, because then you make grimaces derived from Lavater, and because activity alone suits your face; you whom we love well and who merit it from us, tell us if the present is supportable to you and the future gracious."

\* \* \* \* \*

Let us return to Sainte-Radegonde. While botanizing through the woods which surround Paris, Bosc had discovered this retreat. The little house, last relic of a priory long since abandoned, was inhabited by an old peasant woman who gladly offered hospitality to strollers from Paris, when the Revolution broke out.

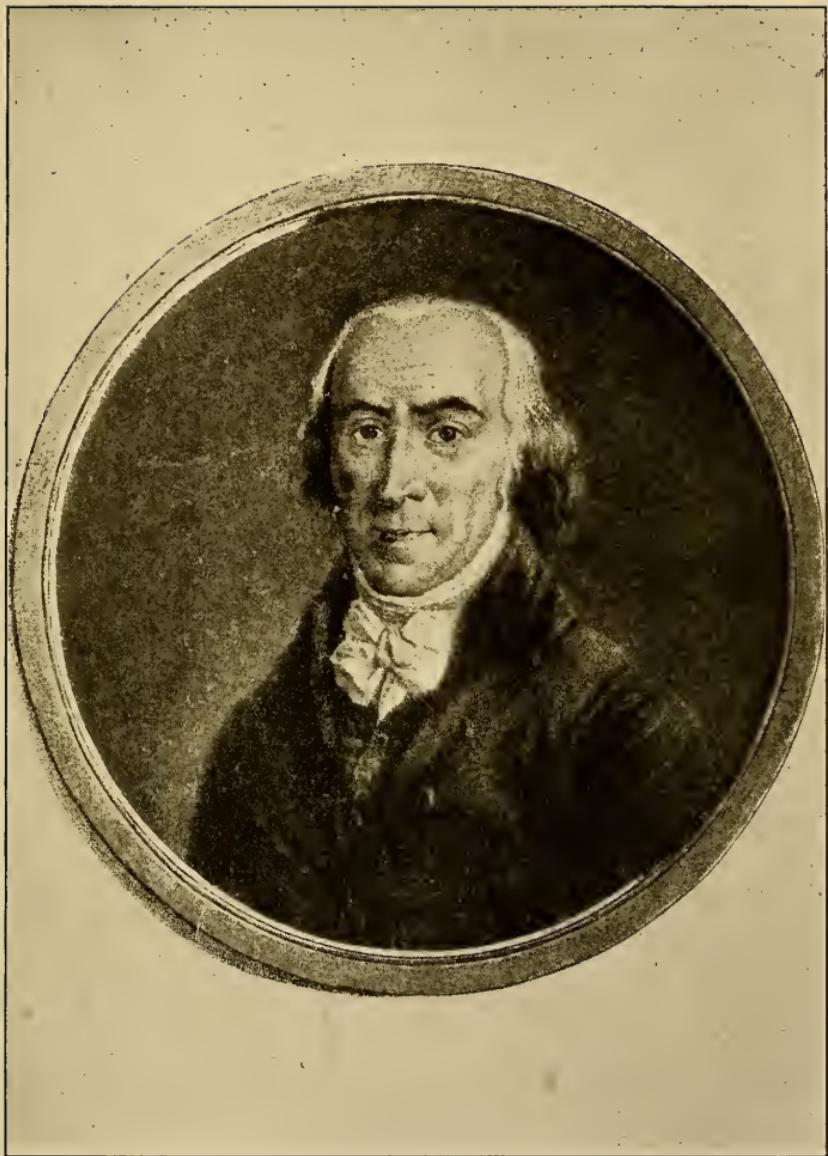
Bosc, by his temperament, his tastes and his friendships, was led to the new ideas. He was not satisfied with presiding over the Society of Natural History; he likewise joined the Society of Friends of the Constitution and, later, he became a member of the Jacobin Club. On September 25, 1791, we find him taking part in a festival given at Montmorency to celebrate the inauguration of a

bust of Rousseau: before the dances and illuminations, he made a speech and offered periwinkles to the spirit of the philosopher.

Meanwhile, the hermitage of Sainte Radegonde, confiscated as ecclesiastical property, was about to be offered for sale, and Bosc was desolated at the thought that a new owner would perhaps forbid him access to the wood where he was accustomed to dream and work. He was poor and could not dream of buying the little property, valued at more than four thousand livres by the experts of the district of Gonesse. So he persuaded his friend Bancal to acquire Sainte Radegonde at the public auction, February 14, 1792. We do not know if he was a partner in the transaction. What seems certain is that Bancal never came to dwell in his hermitage.

A few days later Roland became Minister of the Interior and he named Bosc Administrator of Posts; it was a question of "disaristocratizing" this service. Bosc used his best talents toward it. . . . But, at the end of a year, the Gironde was overthrown, the Girondins were under warrants of arrest, and Bosc took refuge at Sainte Radegonde.

He did not arrive there alone. Roland accompanied him; tracked by the revolutionists of the Commune, separated from his wife, who had been



JEAN MARIE ROLAND



imprisoned in the Abbaye, he concealed himself for fifteen days with his friend before seeking a safer asylum at Rouen, in the home of the Demoiselles Malortie.

After having assured the escape of Roland, Bosc gets hold of his daughter Eudora, who was then twelve years old, and confides her to the wife of his friend Creuzé-Latouche; then he succeeds in entering the prison, where he reassures Madame Roland as to the fate of her child.

After being temporarily released, this lady is again arrested and shut up at Sainte Pélagie. Bosc continues to come and see her at the peril of his life. He brings her flowers, for which he goes to the Botanical Garden; but, one day, he understands the danger of thus going to visit the Thouins, and then it is the flowers of Sainte Radegonde that he brings to the prisoner in a basket. It is to him that Madame Roland confides *Les Notices Historiques* — these are her *Memoirs*, — written in her prison. Finally, when her sentence has become inevitable, she begs from him poison, by which she may escape the insults of the judges and the populace: "Behold my firmness, weigh the reasons, calculate coldly, and appreciate how little is the worth of the canaille, greedy for spectacles." Bosc decides that for her own glory and for the sake of the Republic his friend must

accept all: the outrages of the tribunal, the clamors of the crowd and the horror of the last agony. She submits. A few days later Bosc returns to Paris and hears of her execution.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sainte Radegonde sheltered others who were proscribed.

One day when Bosc visited Creuzé-Latouche, he met there Laréveillière-Lépeaux. The latter, sought for at the same time as his two inseparable friends, Urbain Pilastre and Jean Baptiste Leclerc, had just learned of the flight of Pilastre and the arrest of Leclerc. He wished to return to his home, be arrested, and partake the fate of his friend. Creuzé dissuaded him from this act of despair. . . .

Bosc knew Laréveillière from having formerly seen him at the home of André Thouin, for the future high priest of the Theophilanthropists had become quite expert in botany. He offered to share his hiding place with him. Laréveillière accepted. Both succeeded in leaving Paris without being noticed, and reached Sainte Radegonde.

For three weeks Laréveillière remained hidden in the forest of Émile. (At this time Montmorency was called Émile, in honor of Rousseau.) Neither he nor Bosc had a red cent. They had to live on bread, roots and snails. Besides, their hiding place was not safe; there was nothing unusual in

the presence of Bosc in this solitude, but Laréveillière might any day excite the curiosity of the patriots of Emile. The ugliness of his countenance and the deformity of his figure caused him to be noticed by every passer-by. Robespierre was then living in the hermitage of Jean Jacques; it has even been related that he met the fugitive face to face one day; at all events such an encounter was to be dreaded. The administrators of Seine-et-Oise sometimes took a fancy to hunt in the neighborhood of Sainte Radegonde. . . . The peril increased from day to day. A faithful friend, Pincepré de Buire, invited Laréveillière to take refuge at his home near Péronne. He left Sainte Radegonde.

"The good Mlle. Letourneur," he has related, "gave me two or three handkerchiefs; Rozier, today a counselor at the royal court of Montpellier, then judge of the district of Montmorency, whose acquaintance we had made at Mlle. Letourneur's, put one of his shirts in my pocket. Poor Bosc gave me the widow's mite—he put a stick of white crab in my hand and guided me through the forest to the highway. To use the English expression, on leaving him 'I tore myself from him' with extreme grief." (Note 4.)

Laréveillière arrived without difficulty at the village of Buire.

On the same day that he left Sainte Radegonde, another deputy of the Convention, Masuyer, came to take his place; he was accused because he had assisted at the escape of Pétion; but his greatest crime was that he had, in full Assembly, said to Pache, who insisted on proscriptions: "Haven't you got a little place for me on your list? There would be a hundred crowns in it for you!" Masuyer, disregarding Bosc's advice, wished to enter Paris. He was arrested near the Neuilly Bridge. Bosc, who had insisted on accompanying him, had just time to plunge into the Bois de Boulogne, escaped, and returned to his hermitage, where he awaited the end of the Terror.

\* \* \* \* \*

When he returned to Paris, in the autumn of 1794, Bosc devoted his entire time to the labors imposed upon him by the last will of Madame Roland. He withdrew the manuscript of her *Memoirs* from the hiding place where he had left it, on top of the beam over the stable door of Sainte Radegonde, and published the first part of it in April, 1795. At the same time he endeavored to collect the remnants of the patrimony of Eudora, whose guardianship he had accepted.

Here begins the most melancholy episode of the life of this worthy man. He became smitten

with his pupil. He allowed himself to be blinded by some marks of gratitude. "She is tenderly attached to me," he wrote to one of his friends, "and shows the happiest disposition; so I can no longer fail to meet her wishes and take her for my wife, despite the disproportion of our ages." Nevertheless, he still had scruples, and sent Eudora for several months to the Demoiselles Malortie, who had given asylum to Roland when a fugitive. It was well for him that he did, for his illusion was of short duration. Eudora did not love him. . . .

Without employment, without means, his heart broken, he resolved to expatriate himself. He reached Bordeaux on foot, paid calls on the widows of his friends of the Gironde, and took passage on a ship departing for America. He left France in despair, without receiving a single word of farewell from Eudora. When he landed at Charleston, he learned of the marriage of his pupil to the son of a certain Champagneux, a friend of Madame Roland, to whom he had intrusted the guardianship of the young girl.

Laréveillière, who had become a Director, had him appointed vice-consul at Wilmington, and later consul at New York. But there were great difficulties between the United States and France; he could not obtain his exequatur. He tried to

console himself by devotion to botany. But the wound which he had received still bled. "I do not know," he wrote to Madame Louvet, "when the wound of my heart will be sufficiently healed to allow me to revisit without too much bitterness the places and the individuals still dear to me, whose presence will bring back to me cruel memories. Although I am much more calm than when I left, although I am actually easily distracted by my scientific labors and even by manual occupations, I do not feel that I have courage to return to Paris. I still need to see persons to whom I am indifferent, in order to accustom myself to facing certain persons whom I have loved and whom I cannot forget, whatever injustice they may have done to me or to the Republic, without counting my Eudora. . . ." And his memory takes him back to the dear retreat of Sainte Radegonde; he writes to Bancal: "Well! Then you no longer go to visit Sainte Radegonde? Do you then take no more interest in it? I conclude from that that you will undergo no further expense on account of it and that you will soon get rid of it. Nevertheless I had the project of planting there many trees from this country, since it is the soil most similar to that of South Carolina that I know in the neighborhood of Paris. . . ."

Bosc did see Sainte Radegonde again. At the end of two years he returned to France and married one of his cousins. The Revolution was over and Eudora was forgotten.

From that time on, he gave himself up entirely to his work as a naturalist. He became Inspector of the nurseries of Versailles and also of those which were maintained by the Ministry of the Interior. In 1806 he was elected a member of the Institute. In 1825 he succeeded his friend André Thouin as Professor of Horticulture at the Botanical Garden, and after a long and cruel illness, which prevented him from lecturing, he died in 1828.

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In 1801, when the first daughter born of his marriage had died in infancy, he had begged Bancal to transfer to him two perches of land in his domain of Sainte Radegonde, in order that he might bury his child there. Such was the origin of the little cemetery where Bosc reposes in the midst of his children and his grandchildren.

I have not regretted making a pilgrimage and evoking, in the autumnal forest, the phantoms of these Revolutionists and these botanists.

How touching a figure is that of this Bosc, whose name recalls—it is Laréveillière-Lépeaux who speaks—“the most generous friendship,

the most heroic courage, the purest patriotism, the most active humanity, the most austere probity, the most determined boldness, and at the same time the most extended knowledge in natural science and different branches of administration as well as in political, domestic and rural economy. . ." and also, let us add, the eternal blindness of the amorous Arnolphe!

## V SENLIS

THE spire of the ancient cathedral of Senlis overlooks an immense horizon. This belfry is the lightest, the most elegant, the most harmonious that Gothic art has given us. It rises with a flight so magnificent and so perfectly rhythmical that at the first glance one might think it a growth of nature; it seems to live with the same life as the heavens, the clouds and the birds. This masterly grace, this warm beauty, are, however, the work of time and of men. An architect endowed with genius thought out this miraculous plan, proportioned with this infallible precision the elevation of the different landings, distributed the openings and the surfaces, invented the pointed turrets and the frail columns which flank the edifice, taper off its structure, precipitate its flight and make it impossible to perceive the point at which the square tower is transformed into an octagonal spire, so that the highest pyramid seems to burst forth from a long corolla. Then the centuries have painted the stones with

the pale gold of lichens, and have completed the masterpiece.

The whole of Senlis seems to have been built for the glory of its spire. Streets, gardens, squares, monuments, houses, all seem to be arranged by a mysterious artist, who persists in incessantly bringing back our glance to the dominating spire, the better to reveal to us all its graces and all its magnificence, at all times and under all lights.

We wander at random about the little episcopal city: it is charming, tortuous and taciturn, with its moss-covered pavements, its deserted alleys, its flowering orchards, its shadowed promenades, its ancient houses. We discover at every step houses of earlier days which the barbarism of the men of the present time has spared: here turrets, spiral staircases, doors surmounted by old escutcheons, long half-grotesque gargoyle, mullioned windows, evoke the refined elegance of the fifteenth century; yonder, a wall decorated with pilasters and medallions, or a noble brick and stone crow-stepped façade, witness the opulence of the citizenry at the time of the second Renaissance; there are admirable remains of hospitals of the thirteenth century; heavy Tuscan porches stand before beautiful hôtels of the eighteenth: and all this rich and varied architecture is an excellent commentary on the words of Jean de Jandun,

the historian of Senlis: "To be at Senlis is to dwell in magnificent homes, whose vigorous walls are built, not of fragile plaster, but of the hardest and most selected stone, placed with an industrious skill, and whose cellars, surrounded by solid constructions of stone, so cool the wines during the summer season, thanks to the degree of their freshness, that the throat and the stomach of drinkers thereby experience a supreme delight."

(Note 5.)

To the charm of the spectacle is added the charm of ancient names: the sinuous streets have retained their antique appellations. (How wise is Senlis to maintain these strange words, carved in the stone, at the corners of its streets, rather than to inscribe upon ignoble blue plates the names of all the celebrities dear to Larousse!) The beautiful houses of former days seem in some undiscoverable way to be more living when we discover them in the Street of the Red Mail, the Street of the Trellis, the Street of the White Pigeons, the Street of Tiphaine's Well, the Street of the Little Chaâlis, the Impasse du Courtillet, etc. . . . An amusing sign which represents three scholars arguing with an ape would no longer have any flavor if we had to seek for it in some Place Garibaldi; it is delicious when found at Unicorn Crossways. On the old Town Hall, an

inscription continues to indicate the position of the rabbit and broom market; and it is very fine that the name of Louis Blanc or of Gambetta has not been given to the Street of the Cheese Makers, were it only out of consideration for that excellent Jean de Jandun who, decidedly, well knew how to appreciate all the merits of Senlis, for he wrote in regard to the cheeses of his native town: "The sweetest milk, a butter without admixture, fat cheeses, served in abundance to mean and minor purses, banish that furious activity of the brain which fatigues almost without exception the majority of admirers of highly spiced meats, and thus furnish the well-regulated habitude of a tranquil life and a simplicity of the dove." Façades, names and souvenirs are exquisite; and one says to one's self in sauntering about Senlis that, even without the assistance of the treatment recommended by Jean de Jandun, the silent and antique grace of the little town would be sufficient to inspire in old neurasthenics "the regulated habitude of a tranquil life and a simplicity of the dove. . . ."

The promenade is charming. But neither the picturesqueness of the streets, nor the beauty of the houses, nor the piquancy of the old names, nor even the words of Jean de Jandun are worth as much as the picture which here strikes the

glance at every turn: the spire, always the spire of Notre Dame. It appears suddenly between two gables. It projects above the old brownish tile roofs. Above the flower-covered walls of the gardens it is framed between clumps of lilac and horse-chestnut. It overlooks the houses, it dominates the parks. The poor tower of Saint Peter, with its disgraceful lantern, sometimes accompanies it at a distance, as if to make barbarians better appreciate the grandeur and the slenderness of Notre Dame's incomparable spire.

Senlis has preserved the ruins of its royal château. It is a place which abounds in memories, for a great number of the kings of France, from the Carlovingians to Henri IV, came here to visit for a season. Even its ruins are not without interest. They rest upon the Roman wall, which has remained intact at this spot, and we find there a fireplace of the thirteenth century, towers, casements. . . . But how completely indifferent all this archæology leaves us when we behold the spire of the cathedral emerging from the greenery of the garden! The great trees conceal all the rest of the church. We see only, mounting into the full heaven, the golden pyramid, still finer and more aspiring in the midst of all these spring greeneries. A mysterious harmony exists between the youthful boldness, the robust lightness, of

the human work, and the triumphant freshness of the new vegetation. Besides, the monuments of Gothic art are as marvelously suited to intimacy with nature as to familiarity with life.

This familiarity, which has so often been destroyed by foolishly clearing away the surroundings of cathedrals, proves its value to us at Senlis on the Place du Parvis-Notre-Dame. This is a rectangular space, where grass grows between the paving stones. The façade of the church is framed by two rows of noble chestnuts. Behind a venerable wall rise the turret and the gable of a fifteenth-century house. One might suppose it to be the deserted and well-kept courtyard of a Flemish *béguinage*. In this ancient frame, in the midst of this solitude, the cathedral preserves all its youth. Here there is a perfect unison between the building and its surroundings. Not only are the trees, the walls, the houses, in harmony with the architecture, but this architecture itself remains alive, because its proportions have not been falsified. The dimensions of the square are exactly those which are needed in order that our eye may be able to discover in their beauty of propinquity the portal, the unfinished tower and the spire. All this is so perfect that its grace is eternal.



This cathedral of Senlis would be an incomparable edifice even if it did not possess its sublime spire.

The western portal is one of the most beautiful works of mediæval sculpture. On the two sides of the porch, as on the northern door of Chartres, are arranged the kings and the prophets who foreshadowed the Saviour in the Old Testament. Vandals have mutilated these statues in olden times. In the nineteenth century other savages have restored them and have put in the place of the broken heads masterpieces of bad taste and silliness. Happily these malefactors have spared the rest of the sculptures; they have touched neither the ruins of the charming calendar, whose popular scenes unfold themselves above the kings and the prophets, nor the marvelous statuettes, still almost intact, which adorn the voussoirs of the portal, nor the bas-reliefs of the tympan where angels huddle about the dead Virgin, that some may carry to heaven her body and others her soul. As to the *Coronation of the Virgin*, which occupies the upper part of the tympan, it also has been respected alike by iconoclasts and by restorers. Of all the images of the Mother of God which the sculpture of the thirteenth century has left us, I know none more moving than this Virgin of Senlis. She is a peasant girl, a

simple country maid, with heavy features, and resignation in her face; her unaccustomed hands can scarcely hold the scepter and the book; she is ready for all dolors and for all beatitudes, extenuated by miracles, harassed by maternity, still and always *ancilla Domini*, even in the midst of the glories of the coronation and of the splendors of Paradise.

The church of the twelfth century, to which this doorway belongs, was finished in the thirteenth, burned in the fourteenth, rebuilt in the fifteenth, and again ruined by fire at the beginning of the sixteenth. It is possible to discover in the cathedral of today the traces of these various reconstructions. But, however interesting it may be to follow, upon the stones of the monuments, the history of their vicissitudes, I will spare you this somewhat austere amusement. Continuous archaeology is tiresome.

I stop at the sixteenth century. It was at this period that the church took the form and the aspect which it has preserved to our time.

In 1505, the Bishop Charles de Blanchemort, together with the chapter, addressed the following request to the King: "May it please the King to have pity and compassion on the poor church of Senlis. . . which, by fortune and inconvenience of fire, in the month of June, 1504, was burned,



PORTAL OF THE CATHEDRAL OF SENLIS



the bells melted, and the belfry which is great, magnificent and one of the notable of the kingdom, by means of the said fire in such wise damaged that it is in danger of falling." Louis XII showed himself favorable to the request. Nobles, citizens and merchants contributed to the work. The spire was made firm. The walls of the nave were raised, the vaulting was reconstructed, the transept was built, and there were constructed at the north and south sides those two finely chiseled portals which give to Notre Dame de Senlis so much elegance and sumptuousness. How, without diminishing the pure beauty of the old cathedral, the architects of the Renaissance should have been able to give it this luxurious attire, this festal clothing; how, without damage to the ancient edifice, they should have been able to envelop it with all these laces and jewels of stone, slender columns, balustrades, carved copings, pierced lanterns, is a miracle of taste and ingenuity. The French builders of the first half of the sixteenth century often produced such prodigies; but nowhere, I believe, has the success been as complete as at Senlis.

In the interior, even though the nave is very short and the choir very deep, the same impression of unity. Nevertheless, the balustrades in Renaissance style, which garnish the upper gal-

leries, shock us for a moment. The discrepancy in the styles is more visible inside the edifice. Outside the light envelops all and softens the contrasts; the sun creates harmony.

The chapels are poorly decorated. The architects and clergy have there rivaled each other in bad taste. They have broken open the apse to add to it a chapel of the Virgin, which breaks all the lines of the monument inside and out. Two statues of the thirteenth century, one representing Saint Louis and the other Saint Levain, have been ridiculously colored, so that one would take them today for products of the Rue Bonaparte. A pretty Virgin of the fourteenth century would have been better off without the new gilding which has been inflicted on it. . . .

At the end of the church, I read on one of the pillars the following inscription: "Nicolas Jourdain, administrator of this parish, deceased January 30, 1799.—This church owes to him its restoration and its embellishment. The grateful parishioners have erected this monument to him.—Marie Françoise Truyart, his spouse, equally benefactress of this church, deceased January 17, 1811.—Pray for their souls."

Who was M. Jourdain? What embellishments does the church of Senlis owe to him? I would have liked to know. I looked for the sacristan,

that he might tell me, and also that he might allow me to enter the sacristy, where one may see the Dance of Fools on a capital. But the sacristan of Notre Dame de Senlis dwells very far from his church, on the banks of the Nonette, in the place called the Asses' Backs; he goes home before eleven o'clock in the morning to get his lunch, and is never seen again at the cathedral, according to the bell-ringer, before four o'clock in the afternoon. So I returned at four o'clock. The sacristan was still eating breakfast at the Asses' Backs. . . . So I shall never know anything about either M. Nicolas Jourdain nor Marie Françoise Truyart, his wife.

\*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*

On the other bank of the Nonette, turn about. A little bridge over a little river; some orchards, still pink and white with their last flowers; a street which climbs through the town, whose roofs and uneven gables are outlined softly against a sky of pale blue; remnants of ramparts starred with golden flowers; great clumps of verdure rising everywhere among the rosy roofs, and finally the great belfry dominating all, the little town, the little valley, the fields which rise and fall to the horizon. Behold, and if you are "one of us," you will recognize the most perfect, the most elegant, the finest, the best arranged of all the landscapes

of the world. Here is France, the France of Fouquet, the France of Corot.

And I must also, before leaving Senlis, announce that this truly aristocratic town has not a single statue in its squares.

## VI

### JUILLY

THE Oratorist Fathers founded the college of Juilly September 2, 1639. They still directed it when these lines were written. The world knows what fate has since come to the masters of this old institution.

Here we are deep in the soil and the history of France. Juilly, an ancient monastery of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine, is seven leagues from Paris, four leagues from Meaux, in the Parisis, in the heart of the region where France discovered that it had a conscience, a destiny, a tongue and an art. The earth here is so opulent, so fat and so heavy that six oxen harnessed to a plow labor over the furrow. The rich plateau lifts here and there in slow and measured undulations or sinks in laughing and umbrageous folds. The brooks are called the Biberonne, the Ru du Rossignol (Nightingale Brook); the villages, Thieux, Compans, Dam-martin, Nantouillet. Joan of Arc prayed in the church of Thieux. Saint Geneviève, to slake

the thirst of one of her companions, called forth the limpid spring about which the monastery grew. All the virtues and all the legends of France render the air more gentle and more salubrious here.

The valley of Juilly has the modest and penetrating grace of the exquisite landscapes of the Ile-de-France. At the bottom of the valley stretch lawns and a pool with formal banks. On one of the slopes, a beautiful park displays its grand parallel avenues, which debouch on wide horizons, a park made expressly for the promenade of a metaphysician, a Cartesian park. On the opposite slope, a farm, a dovecote, then the vast buildings of the college, massive constructions of the seventeenth century, whose austere and naked façades are not without grandeur.

On the edge of the pool rises a chestnut tree, thrice centenarian. Tradition will have that it sheltered the reveries of Malebranche. It is perhaps in this place that the Oratorist read Descartes, with such transports "that he was seized with palpitations of the heart, which sometimes obliged him to interrupt his reading," an extraordinary emotion which inspired Fontenelle with this delicious remark: "The invisible and useless truth is not accustomed to find so much sensitiveness among men, and the most ordinary



THE POOL AT JUILLY



objects of their passions would hold themselves happy to be the object of as much."

The chestnut tree of Malebranche has been pruned. Under the weight of centuries, its branches bent and broke. They have been cut, and the venerable trunk now stretches toward the sky only the wounded stumps. This spectacle in this place makes one think of the destiny of a philosophy. The decaying branches of the system have been broken, the soil has been strewn with the great branches under which men formerly enjoyed the repose of certainty. But, when the pruner has finished his task, we still admire the structure of the old tree and the fecundity of the soil whence it grew.

The college, with its long corridors and its vast staircases, preserves a monastic appearance, which would be severe and harsh if the countryside, the grass plots, the park and the pool did not display their gayety about the old walls. When M. Demolins and his imitators created their new schools, they followed the example of England; but, in a certain manner, they revived a French tradition. Before any one thought of crowding children into the university barracks of the nineteenth century, there were in France colleges where life was lived in the open air, in the midst of a beautiful park.

Within, the house is grave and without luxury. The Oratorists were never rich. The house has remained almost in the state in which it was in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The chapel only was rebuilt a few years ago, for the ancient convent chapel of the thirteenth century had fallen to ruins. The magnificent wainscotings of oak in the strangers' refectory enframe paintings of the time of Louis XV, representing skating, fishing and hunting scenes; the staircase which leads to the apartments of the Superior is ornamented with a beautiful railing of iron and brass; these are the only traces of ancient decoration to be met with in the whole college.

But the ancient home is rich in memories. Before entering, we have already half seen on the bank of the pool the meditative shade of Malebranche. Other ghosts rise on every side. The Oratory of France lives again at Juilly.

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Here, in the chapel, is the image of Cardinal de Bérulle. This statue, an admirable work by Jacques Sarazin, is the upper portion of a mausoleum which the Oratorist Fathers of Paris had erected in their institution to the memory of their founder. The cardinal, in full canonicals, kneels on a *prie-dieu*, in the attitude of prayer, with an open book before him. His head and the upper

portion of his body turn toward the left in a curious way, but the face is a prodigy of life and expression. The coarse features, strongly accentuated, breathe good-will and kindness. He has the magnificent ugliness of a saint.

The concordat of Francis I had caused the moral ruin of the convents of France; the secular clergy, among the troubles of the religious wars, had fallen into the most miserable condition, without piety, without knowledge, and without manners, when, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Pierre de Bérulle, Madame Acarie and Saint Vincent de Paul undertook the religious restoration of France, which the adjuration of Henri IV had just definitely restored to Catholicism. Bérulle founded the Oratory of France on the model of the Oratory of Rome, instituted by Saint Philip Néri.

On November 11, 1611, Saint Martin's Day, in a house of the Faubourg Saint Jacques, called the House of Petit Bourbon (the Val-de-Grâce was later built on this same spot), Bérulle and five other priests assembled to constitute a congregation. The aim of this was to "increase the perfection of the priestly calling." But its rule and its spirit had nothing in common with the rule and the spirit of the monastic orders. The Oratorian does not pronounce special vows, and

remains under the jurisdiction of his bishop.

Bossuet, in his funeral oration on Father Bourgoing, splendidly summarized the constitution of the Oratory:

"The immense love of Pierre de Bérulle for the Church inspired him with the design of forming a company to which he desired to give no other spirit than the very spirit of the Church nor any other rules than its canons, nor any other superiors than its bishops, nor any other bonds than its charity, nor any other solemn vows than those of baptism and of the priesthood.

"There, a holy liberty makes a holy engagement. One obeys without dependence, one governs without commands; all authority is in gentleness, and respect exists without the aid of fear. The charity which banishes fear operates this great miracle, and, with no other yoke than itself, it knows how, not only to capture, but even to annihilate personal will."

The Jesuits had returned to France seven years before Pierre de Bérulle created the Oratory. He was not the enemy of the Company of Jesus, since he himself had labored to procure its return to France. His work was none the less opposed to that of Saint Ignatius. "In our body," said a century later an Oratorian who was faithful to the spirit of his congregation, "liberty consists . . .

in wishing and in doing freely what one ought, *quasi liberi.*" This *quasi liberi* is exactly the opposite of the famous *perinde ac cadaver*. We may understand sufficiently why, in the course of time, the Jesuits showed little sympathy for the Oratorists. The work of Pierre de Bérulle must have appeared to them a perilous compromise between Catholic orthodoxy and the detested principles of the Reformation: what good is it to renew, at every moment of one's life, one's adhesion to a rule to which it is more simple and more sure to enchain one's self once for all? Why wish to give one's self at any cost the haughty joy of feeling and exercising one's liberty? And what is this annihilation which allows the will to reassert itself incessantly, vivacious and active? The Jesuits, therefore, were not surprised to see the Oratory threatened by the Jansenist contagion.

We might be tempted to say, employing a vocabulary which is too modern, that the spirit of the Oratory was, from its inception, a liberal spirit. Let us rather say: It was a *Cartesian* spirit. Pierre de Bérulle loved and admired Descartes and urged him to publish his writings. The greatest of disciples of Descartes, Malebranche, was an Oratorist. . . . A Jesuit would not have failed to call our attention also to the fact that here is displayed the imprudence of Pierre de

Bérulle and of his successors; for from *methodical doubt* came all the rationalism of the eighteenth century. . . .

Let us return to Juilly.

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On the walls of the masters' refectory hangs a long series of portraits: they are those of the Generals Superior of the Oratory and of some illustrious Oratorists. The most beautiful is that of Malebranche: this long, meager face witnesses the candid and simple soul of the metaphysician, who saw "all in God." Other paintings are less attractive. But they are all precious for the history of the Oratory and of Juilly. . . . Let us stop before some of these images.

*Father de Condren.* "God had rendered him," said Saint Chantal, "capable of instructing angels." His features are impressed with infinite gentleness; but the height of his forehead and the veiled splendor of his glance reveal an unconquerable tenacity, and thanks to this contrast the whole face assumes a strange delicacy.

Pierre de Bérulle died at the age of fifty-four, overcome by fatigue; his labor had been immense; he had created and guided his congregation, founded seminaries, delivered sermons, written books, guided consciences, and he had been mixed up in affairs of state. It was Father de Condren

who succeeded him in the office of Superior General. He gave to the Oratory its permanent constitution and founded Juilly.

With Father de Condren, the Oratory abandoned the path which its founder had traced for it. It was less occupied in forming the clergy and instituting seminaries than in giving instruction to lay youth. The original purpose of the congregation was thereafter followed and achieved by M. Olier and the priests of Saint Sulpice. The wishes of Louis XIII were not averse to this change, for which in any case Father de Condren had no dislike; he had taste and talent for teaching. The ancient abbey of Juilly was thus transformed into a model college called the *Royal Academy* (1638). The King authorized the institution to add the arms of France to the arms of the Oratory.

Father de Condren himself prepared the new regulations for study and discipline of the young Academy. These regulations were a veritable reform in French education,—a durable and profound reform, for the programs of the University in the nineteenth century were drawn up in accordance with the principles of the Oratory.

At that period the Jesuits were masters of education and instruction. They considered as the foundation of all studies a grammatical knowledge of the dead languages, and gave little attention

to history and the exact sciences. They had instituted that classical education which is so appropriate to the very genius of our nation that its ruin would perhaps be the downfall of our language, our taste and our literature. Nevertheless, their method in certain respects was narrow and antiquated: they excluded the history and the language of France from a college training.

The work of the Oratorists was in a certain measure to Frenchify and modernize the instruction of the Jesuits. They remained faithful to classic antiquity. A year before his death, Father de Condren said to Thomassin that he did not desire to leave this world until he had once more read the entire works of Cicero. However, the *Ratio Studiorum*, at Juilly, introduced great novelties in the college course. The masters were required to address the youths in their mother tongue and to put in their hands Latin grammars written in French. From that time they began by learning the rules of French orthography. Latin became obligatory only from the fourth class on. The Catechism was given in Latin only in the second class. History lessons were always given in French. In the study of Latin, without abandoning the use of themes, translations were preferred. Greek was taught in the same way, but its knowledge was not pushed as far. A

special chair of history was instituted. The history of France was given first place, and became the object of a three-year course. The private library of the pupils contained principally books on ancient and modern history. There were also geography lessons. Finally, in this Cartesian house, mathematics and physics naturally received great honor.

They also taught drawing, music, horsemanship, fencing and dancing. But comedies and ballets, which the Jesuits allowed their pupils, were replaced at Juilly by the sessions of a sort of literary Academy where the most advanced pupils imitated the French Academy.

Richelieu, who had so profound and just an instinct for the interest of France in all directions, could not be indifferent to the enterprise of Father de Condren. He understood that the Oratorists were associating themselves with his great work, gave their methods "applause such as one could scarcely believe," and, when he founded a college in his natal town of Richelieu, laid out the regulations and the program in imitation of those which were in use at Juilly.

Sainte-Beuve has done honor to the little schools of Port-Royal for this great revolution in teaching: "It is indeed," he says, "to these gentlemen of Port-Royal that the honor is due of having

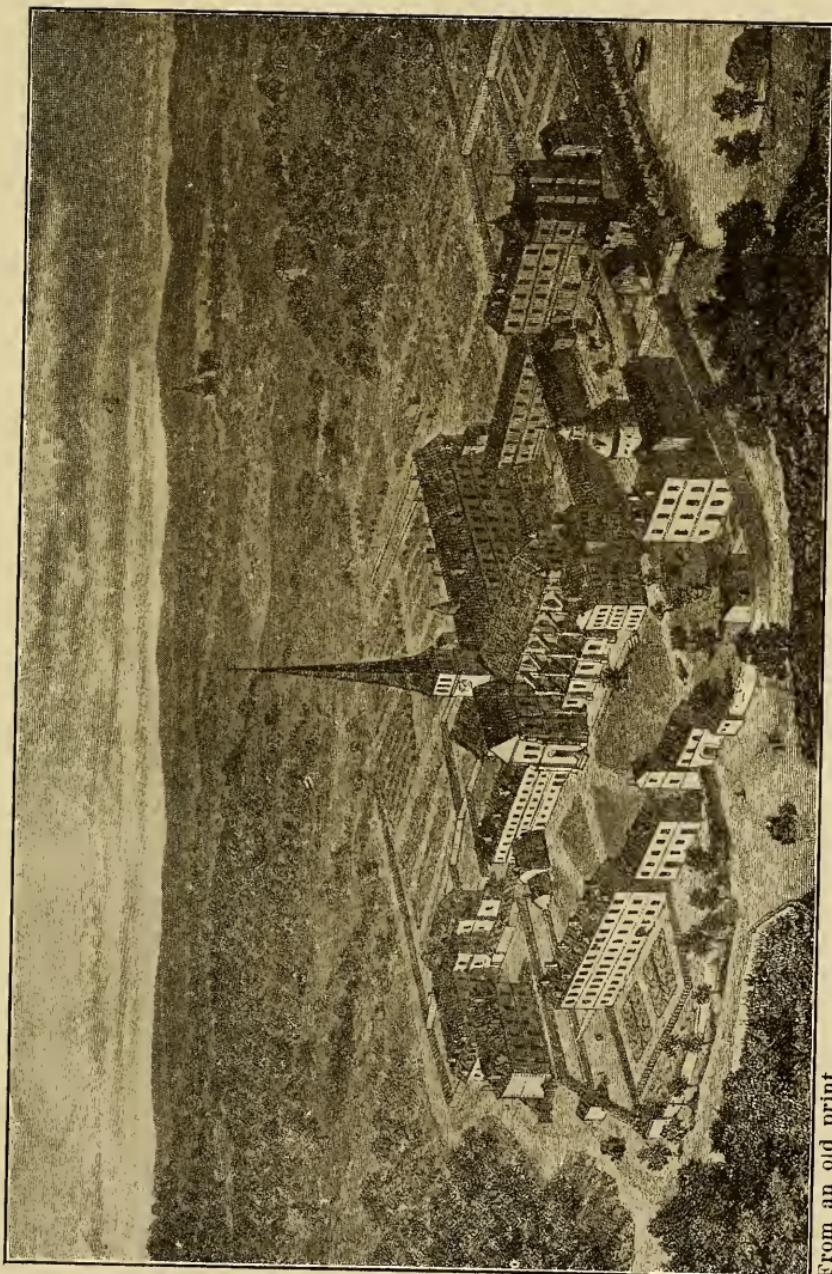
put education in accord with the literary progress which the French Academy accomplished about the same time, and for having first introduced the regularity and elegance of French into the current of learned studies. To get rid of pedantry without ruining solidity, might have been their motto. . . . So, a great innovation! To teach children to read in French, and to choose in French the words which stood for the objects with which they were already acquainted and of which they knew the meaning: this was the point of departure of Port-Royal. . . .” (Note 6.)

A historian of Juilly (M. Charles Hamel) has observed that the lower schools were opened only four years after the foundation of Juilly, and that we must restore to Father de Condren the glory of having been the first “to get rid of pedantry without ruining solidity,” and to cause French to be spoken in the schools of France. (Note 7.)

*Father Bourgoing.* This third superior was a harsh and absolute master. He was also a rather rough man of business and one who was not embarrassed by an excess of power. He imposed the authority of the rules in all possible ways. His conduct had a tinge of superb vehemence which contrasted strongly with the modesty and gentleness of his predecessors. The Jansenist

From an old print

THE ABBEY OF PORT-ROYAL





heresy was commencing to hover around the Oratory. Father Bourgoing drew back those who were straying, with a rough and heavy crook. He was, besides, as Cardinal Perraud says, in *L'Oratoire de France*, "the living model of the virtues which he desired that others should practice." (Note 8.) He inflicted terrible penances. We behold him to his very last day "shorten his sleep in spite of his need; endure the rigors of cold despite his advanced years; continue his fasts in spite of his labors; finally afflict his body by all sorts of austerities without considering his bodily infirmities." Thus Bossuet expressed himself in his funeral oration for Father Bourgoing, one of the least celebrated, but one of the most magnificent, that he composed. We have only to read it to know the men and the spirit of the Oratory in the seventeenth century.

*Father de Sainte-Marthe.* This man seems to have been a student, full of virtue, good sense and good fellowship, but a man who found himself very much at a loss in the midst of vexations. And it was exactly at the period of his government that the tempests were unloosed upon the Oratory. Jansenism had entered the house. Fathers Quesnel and Du Guet were expelled from the community. But these punishments did not satisfy the Archbishop of Paris, M. de Harlay,

who wished to govern the Oratory with a strong hand. In the midst of these griefs and intrigues the unfortunate Father de Sainte-Marthe exonerated himself, proclaimed his submission, preached conciliation, sought to ward off the animosity of the Archbishop and the King, defended his congregation against the assaults of heresy, and went away in exile from province to province, until the day came when it was necessary for him to resign his office. . . . The more we look at the portrait of Father de Sainte-Marthe, the more we pity this good priest, who was evidently born to live in fair weather.

*Father de la Tour.* One of the most pleasing portraits in the refectory of Juilly, full of grace and malice. Saint-Simon has also drawn a portrait of Father de la Tour and the painter has added nothing to the sketch of the writer. "He was tall of stature, well built, agreeable but imposing of countenance, well known for his pliant but firm mind, adroit but strong in his sermons, in the way he led in gay and amusing conversation without departing from the character which he bore, excelling by a spirit of 'wisdom, conduct and government, and held in the greatest consideration.'

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We have arrived at the threshold of the eight-

eenth century. Before going farther, let us evoke once more the remembrance of two illustrious guests of whom the old house was proud.

They still show at Juilly the room of Bossuet. It is lined with very simple paneling and has an alcove. The furnishings are in the style of the First Empire. It is here that Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, often slept in the course of his pastoral visits, for Juilly was situated in his diocese. He preached in the village chapel and presided at the exercises of the Academy. On August 6, 1696, he wrote to his nephew, Abbé Bossuet: "I came here to listen to a thesis which was dedicated to me. There are here a number of worthy people, and the flower of the Oratory. . . ."

The other "great man," whose memory has been preserved at Juilly is Jean de La Fontaine.

He was scarcely twenty years old when a canon of Soissons, named Héricart, lent him some religious books. The reading of these inflamed him with great devotion and he believed that he was called to the ecclesiastical state. He departed for Paris and entered the institution at the Oratory on April 27, 1641. This was his first distraction.

A few weeks later his masters sent him to Juilly, under Father de Verneuil, who was to prepare him for ordination. La Fontaine read Marot and looked out of the window. Now, as his room over-

looked the farmyard, he amused himself every day by watching the hens pick up their living. To get the sympathy of the hen-keeper, he let down by a cord his cap full of bread crumbs.

Father Bourgoing, then superior of the congregation, was not the man to sympathize with the tastes and crotchets of Jean de La Fontaine; he sent him back to Paris, to the seminary of Saint-Magloire. Then one fine day, the young man went away as he had come, leaving behind him his brother, Claude de La Fontaine, who, taking his example seriously, had also entered the Oratory. His stay at Juilly does not seem to have left a very deep trace in its memory. But he had at least furnished the future students of the college with a very fine subject for Latin verses.

It is well known that Canon Héricart, as he had not been able to make a priest of his friend, later decided to marry him to one of his relatives. La Fontaine went to the marriage as he had gone to the Oratory; he escaped from it in the same way.

The fate of the Oratory of France was less glorious in the eighteenth century than it had been in the seventeenth: the theological quarrels which broke out as a result of the Bull *Unigenitus* divided and enfeebled the congregation. But the renown of Juilly did not suffer from this, and the



JEAN DE LA FONTAINE



college founded by Father de Condren prospered. The buildings of the old monastery were reconstructed and enlarged. The methods of instruction remained the same. As to discipline, it is said to have been quite paternal, and was exercised by reprimands or affectionate chidings rather than by punishments. At Juilly, however, as in all colleges, the children continued to be whipped.

In 1762, the Jesuits were expelled from France and their properties sold. This was apparently a great advantage for the Oratory: the closing of the colleges of the Company of Jesus made it the master of education. But the thoughtful Oratorists did not fall into this illusion. "It is the destruction of our congregation," said Father de la Valette at that time; he understood that this brutal blow touched the Church itself, even if some doubted this and others were unwilling to admit it. Besides, the succession of the Jesuits was too heavy a burden to be undertaken. The Oratory was not sufficiently numerous suddenly to take charge of so many houses; it found it necessary to associate with itself a great number of "lay brothers," whose vocation was doubtful; these young "regents" were generally found to be unprepared to undergo the constraints of a religious rule. This was being discovered when the Revolution broke out.

An old student of Juilly, Antoine Vincent Arnault, a tragic poet, author of *Marius à Minturne*, *Lucrèce*, *Cincinnatus*, etc., whom Napoleon wished to have as collaborator in writing a tragedy and who was the predecessor of Scribe in the French Academy, left some interesting memoirs entitled *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*. (Note 9.) He was born in 1766 and entered Juilly in 1776. He has told us of his college years, "the eight unhappiest years of his life." Thanks to him, we know the existence which was the rule at Juilly from 1780 to 1784, and what professors had charge of the instruction. The picture seems to me to be worth redrawing, now that we know the architecture and the history of the school.

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The superior of the house at that time was Father Petit. "A skilled administrator, a prudent director, a mentality without prejudice or illusions, more of a philosopher than he perhaps believed himself to be, indulgent and malevolent at once, he guided this great house with good words, and maintained admirable order in it for thirty years. . . . Religious, but not fanatical, he did not forget that he was director of a boarding school and not of a seminary, and that the children who were confided to him were to live in the world: so he was especially anxious that

they should be turned into worthy men: this was his own expression."

In truth, this "admirable order" was sometimes troubled. The collegians of 1780 played their parts: they wrote little verses and little libels against their masters, became enthusiastic about the American Revolution, and played at uprisings. The wisdom and moderation of Father Petit did not always succeed in calming the revolutionary effervescence of these youths. The wind which commenced to blow across France blew hard even in the high monastic corridors of Juilly.

The middle classroom was the most turbulent and the promptest to revolt against iniquity. One day these "middles" decided to hang their prefect in effigy. The victim got angry, shut off recreation and ordered the children to return to the schoolroom. Instantly the candles went out; dictionaries, candlesticks, writing desks, became so many projectiles which rained upon the prefect's back; struck down by a copy of the *Gradus*, the pedant fled. The class then built barricades and lit a bonfire, into which they threw the ferule, the mortarboard and the scholarship record which the enemy had left upon the field of battle. They refused to listen to overtures of peace, and remained deaf to the warnings of the Superior,

although they were in the habit of respecting them.

From the viewpoint of a man who later went through several revolutions, Arnault here makes this judicious remark: "Whoever may be the individuals of which it is composed, the mob always obeys the same principles. The breath of a child in a glass of water produces the same effects as the blast of the hurricane upon the ocean."

It became necessary to turn the siege into a blockade. On the next day, vanquished by hunger, the scholars surrendered. They were promised a general amnesty. But, once in possession, the besiegers violated the treaty. "Then," adds Arnault, "I understood what politics was; I saw that it was not always in accord with the morality which we were so eloquently advised to respect as the equal of religion." And this was doubtless the reason why there were so many prefects of the Empire among the former pupils of Juilly!

Father Petit was not the only Oratorist of whom Arnault handed down a good report. Father Viel, the translator of *Télémaque* into Latin verse, showed so much justice and goodness in the college that the students always arranged to rebel while he was traveling, thus showing how much they respected him. Father Dotteville, the

translator of Sallust and of Tacitus, built at Juilly a charming retreat where he cultivated literature and flowers. Father Prioleau, who taught philosophy, knew how to make all work lovable, even the study of Aristotle's *Categories*. Father Mandar, who later became superior of the college, was famous as a preacher — he was compared to Massillon — and as a poet — he was compared to Gresset. His lively muse, fertile in songs, rose even to descriptive poetry. Father Mandar wrote a poem called the *Chartreuse*; for he was sensitive to the beauties of nature and Jean Jacques had sought his company. . . . These remained, even to the end of their life, faithful to their vocation. Others failed in this, and owed their great celebrity neither to translations nor to the practice of oratorical virtues. Juilly was a nursery of Revolutionists and of Conventionals.

One day — science was still honored in this Cartesian college — it was decided to give the pupils a scientific recreation. Under the direction of their professor of physics, they built a fire balloon of paper, upon which a prefect of studies who indulged in fugitive verse wrote this quatrain of his own composition:

“We have grown too old for soap bubbles;  
In changing balloons we change pleasures.  
If this carried our first homage to King Louis,  
The winds would blow it to the goal of our desires.”

We do not know if the fire balloon came down in the park of Versailles. But we do know the names of the physicist and the poet of Juilly. The physicist was Father Fouché, and the poet was Father Billaud (Billaud-Varennes). Arnault remarks in this connection: "Ten years afterward, they showed themselves less gracious toward the monarch."

Father Billaud, *good* Father Billaud, as he was called at Juilly, was a young man of twenty-one years. He was the son of a lawyer of La Rochelle who had neither fortune nor clients. He had scarcely left college when he abducted a young girl and then became a member of a troupe of comedians. He was a failure on the stage and returned to La Rochelle. There he put on the stage a satirical comedy: *La Femme comme il n'y en a plus*, in which he defamed all the women of his town. It was hissed off the boards and he had to flee to Paris. As he was penniless, he entered the Oratory; and, as the Oratory needed regents for its colleges, they sent him to Juilly as prefect of studies. His pupils loved his good fellowship. But his superiors had very quickly seen what was under the mask. "Billaud—To judge by the way in which he reads Latin, he does not know it very well. Has he brains? I have not had sufficient time to find out. But he





*The Fountain of Neptune, Versailles.*

*From a water-color by Blanche McManus.*



Bassin de Neptune  
VERSAILLES

Georges Méliès  
1907



has a high opinion of himself, and I regard him as only a worldly man, clothed in the habit of the Oratory, coolly regular and honest, who has tried hard not to compromise himself in the last few months, for when he first came here his behavior was not of the best. Though he may be judicious in his conduct, I do not think that he is suited to the Oratory, because of his age, of what he has been, and of what he is." Such was the judgment passed upon him by his superior, for the Superior General of the congregation, in 1784. Shortly afterward it was learned that Father Billaud had offered a tragedy to the comedian Larive: he was expelled. . . . We know what followed: his entry of the bar at Paris, his marriage to the natural daughter of a farmer-general, his friendship with Marat and Robespierre, his complicity in the massacres of September, his ferocities and cowardices, his turnabout on the ninth of Thermidor, his banishment to Guiana, his escape, his death in San Domingo. He ended his career as a teacher of parrots.

Was *good* Father Billaud of Juilly a hypocrite? Did he already dissimulate under the appearance of cold regularity the wild passions of the Jacobin of '93? . . . I prefer the explanation of Arnault who, decidedly, does not lack judgment: "Father Billaud, who later became so frightfully famous

under the name of Billaud-Varennes, also appeared to be a very good man at that time, and perhaps he was so; perhaps he would even have been so all his life, if he had remained a private citizen, if the events which provoked the development of his atrocious policy and the application of his frightful theories had never presented themselves. I would prefer to believe that morally, as physically, we all carry in ourselves the germs of more than one grave malady, from which we seem to be exempt as long as we do not meet the circumstance which is capable of provoking the explosion."

Father Fouché, professor of physics, was a year older than Father Billaud. He also passed at Juilly as a good fellow, and interested his pupils by showing them spectacular physical experiments. He, however, did not enter the Oratory from necessity or caprice. He was brought up by the Oratorists of Nantes, and had come to the institution at Paris with the intention of devoting himself to the teaching of science. He had no bent for theology, but was fond of studying Horace, Tacitus and Euclid's Commentaries. He was soon to abandon Euclid; but he did not forget the examples of perfect wickedness which were presented to him by Tacitus, and he served the Terror, the Directory and Napoleon with the cold infamy of a freedman; as for Horace, he was

never faithless to him, for he had a taste for gardens and for friendship.

He was regent at Vendôme, then at Juilly, then at Arras, where he made the acquaintance of Robespierre. He was prefect of studies at Nantes when the Revolution threw him into public life.

He never forgot Juilly. Perhaps some of the verses of Horace were associated in his mind with the memory of the trees of the park and the waters of the pool. . . . In 1802, when he was Minister of the General Police, he wished to come to visit his old college, he who, in the time of the Terror, in the Nièvre and at Lyons, had added to the most frightful massacres the most childish sacrilege. Events then passed easily over the imagination of men, and even more quickly over the imagination of a Fouché. An ex-Oratorist, Father Dotteville, accompanied him to Juilly. The pupils received the visitors by singing verses of their own composition:

Leaving, to revisit your friends,  
The worries of the ministry,  
Such leisures as are allowed you  
In that solitary asylum;  
Our forebears had the good fortune  
To profit by your lessons . . . .

This last allusion appeared a little too precise to Fouché, who turned his back on the singers. But, after this moment of ill humor, his Excellency showed himself very amiable. Fathers Lombois

and Crenière, his former associates, who still lived at Juilly, refused to speak to him, however. But he did not despair of weakening their determination, and it was he who in 1806 gave to the chapel of the college the magnificent statue of Bérulle, of which I have spoken to you.

It was natural that Fouché, when he became an official under Bonaparte, should show himself less vehemently irreligious than at the period when he was the colleague of Collot d'Herbois. It was even necessary for him to pretend devotion when Louis XVIII consented to give him a civil position. But it is impossible to read without smiling the following lines written to M. Charles Hamel, the historian of Juilly, by L. Roberdeau, the former secretary of Fouché: "Here are the facts, whose exactness I can guarantee to you. The curate of Ferrières always had a place set for him at the château, when the Duke of Otranto was there. He received from him annually a supplementary salary of six hundred francs and was allowed to sign wood, bread and meat tickets *ad libitum*, as well as to call for any other kind of aid or to distribute arms. The Duke also gave a magnificent dais to the church. [This touch is exquisite, when attributed to the former conventional who had methodically plundered and wrecked all the churches of the Nièvre.] The

doctor of the château was required to take care of all the invalid poor of his domains; he exacted that they should receive the same attention as himself, etc." But this is the most admirable: "I do not know in what sentiments the Duke of Otranto died; but I know that, when Louis XVIII offered him an ambassadorship of the first rank, *he chose the humble court of Dresden because the King of Saxony was known to be a sincerely religious man.*" I do not doubt that Fouché may have thus talked to his credulous secretary. It is possible that he even said the same thing to Louis XVIII. But the King assuredly did not believe it, and was right.

I cannot decide to leave Fouché without quoting in this place some lines from a magnificent portrait drawn by Charles Nodier. This passage is almost unknown, being buried in the *Dictionnaire de la conversation*; M. Charles Hamel has quoted it in his book: ". . . There was not a feature in his face, not a line in all its structure, on which work or care had not left their imprint. His visage was pale, with a paleness which was peculiar to himself. It was a cold but living tone, like that which time gives to monuments. The power of his eyes, which were of a very clear blue, but deprived of any light in their glance, soon prevailed over all the impressions which his first

aspect produced on one. Their curious, exacting, profound, but immutably dull fixedness, had a quality which was frightful. . . . I asked myself by what operation of the will he could thus succeed in extinguishing his soul, in depriving the pupil of its animated transparency, in withdrawing his glance into an invisible sheath as a cat retracts its claws." This is wonderful!

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Father Fouché and Father Billaud were not the only masters of Juilly who played a part in the Revolution. About the same time Father Gaillard was regent of the sixth class, and Father Bailly was prefect of studies. This Father Gaillard was a terrible man; he frightened his pupils by his severity and his intractable piety. "Here is a man who, if justice had been done, would have been burned, together with his writings," he said before a portrait of Jean Jacques. In 1792 he left Juilly, having exchanged his robe for the uniform of the National Guard; he went with his company to Melun, where he married and became president of the criminal court. Later he found means of paying a compliment to the First Consul, and had the good luck again to come in contact with his former associate Fouché. The latter elevated him to the Court of Cassation, and made him one of his agents; Gaillard rendered great

services to the Duke of Otranto, at the court of Ghent.

Father Bailly also left the Oratory to take part in public affairs; but he had more moderate opinions. As a deputy to the Convention from Meaux, he voted against the death of the King; he was one of the Thermidorians, took part in the Eighteenth Brumaire, and became a prefect of the Empire. . . .

If we believe with Taine that the Revolution was entirely an outcome of Cartesianism and of the classic spirit, what a beautiful allegory is this assembly of future Revolutionists in square caps, under the wide branches of Malebranche's chestnut tree!

\* \* \* \* \*

The Oratory did not survive the Revolution, but Juilly outlived the Oratory.

After 1789, the congregation was divided against itself. Some fathers were willing to take the oath; others refused it. Some of the young associates scorned the authority of the Superior General. The law of August 18, 1792, dissolved the Oratory. But the Oratorists remained at Juilly at the very height of the tumult. One day mobs from Meaux invaded the buildings and pillaged the chapel; even after this, a few priests and a score of pupils again assembled in the col-

lege. They left it only during three months in 1793, when a military hospital was installed in place of the school. After the Terror was over, the woman who had acquired Juilly as a national property returned it to its former masters. The college peopled itself anew.

Napoleon dreamed for a time of reëstablishing the Oratory and of putting it in charge of all secondary education; Jérôme was brought up at Juilly. But this project was abandoned. But at least, when he reorganized the University, Fontanes was inspired by the rules and the programs of the colleges of the Oratory.

The last Oratorists retired in 1828. Juilly passed under the direction of the Abbés de Scorbiac and de Salinis. Then comes another of the glorious moments of its history. In 1830 and in 1831 Lamennais became the guest of Juilly. Enveloped in his long black quilted coat, following by choice the path at the water's edge — doubtless to rediscover there memories of the pool of La Chesnaie, Lamennais carried back and forth, under the trees of the old park, his passionate dreams. It was here that he meditated his articles for *L'Avenir*, conceived the plan of the "General Agency for the Defense of Religious Liberty," composed the ardent diatribes in which he claimed independence for the Church, the right of teaching

for Catholics, freedom to associate for the monks. It was here that he charmed his friends by the sensitiveness of his heart and frightened them by the boldness of his imagination. It was from Juilly that he returned to Paris to appear with Lacordaire before the Court of Assizes. It was from Juilly that he left for Rome. . . .

Abbé Bautain and Abbé Carl, then Abbé Maricourt, directed Juilly after MM. de Scorbiac and de Salinis, up to the time (1867) when the reconstituted Oratory reentered in possession of the college founded by Father de Condren.

In 1852 a few priests had been united by Father Pétetot, ex-curate of Saint Roch, for the purpose of restoring the congregation dispersed at the time of the Revolution. They had sought and found the traditions of the former Oratory, and slowly "reconstituted in its entirety the pacific and studious city built more than two centuries before by Father de Bérulle." "They could then," said Cardinal Perraud, "place a living model under their eyes in order to imitate it." The Oratory was thus reborn with the ancient rule which had formerly been its originally—a simple association of lay priests submissive to bishops, it asked of its members neither the vow of obedience nor the vow of poverty. (Note 10.) It was natural that it should undertake the direction

of Juilly, the most ancient and the most glorious  
of its houses. . . .

Here I end the rather desultory notes which I have made while visiting Juilly and rummaging through its history. I wish to speak neither of yesterday, nor of today . . . , nor of tomorrow. I have not attempted to plead for the masters of Juilly, now threatened with again being expelled from their house. I have not the ability to defend them, and besides one cannot plead against a position already taken, or folly, or wickedness.

Nor have I the candor to believe that the illustrious phantoms with which are populated the shady avenues and the long galleries of Juilly, Malebranche, Bossuet, La Fontaine, Lamennais, can move the vulgar pedants to whom France now belongs. But if by chance I have evoked "the long, mobile and flat face . . . the physiognomy like an agitated fizgig . . . the little bloody eyes . . . the restless and convulsive attitudes" of Joseph Fouché, I have allowed myself this historical amusement, without thinking that the President of the Council may be able to take the same pleasure in it. Father Fouché and the representative of the Mountain, the bad Oratorist and the good Jacobin, must be congenial to him, without doubt; but there is also the Duke of Otranto: M. Combes has not yet got to that point.

Finally, if I have tried to show that the Oratory is attached by a close bond to the past of France, that the mold in which, for two centuries and a half, French intelligence was founded was fabricated at Juilly, and that the very basis of our education remains Oratorist in spite of everything, I have not for a single instant dreamed that these considerations based on history could awake the least respect or the least gratitude among the politicians, for these gentlemen are sincerely convinced that France was born on the day when a majority of three votes, captured, bought or stolen, made them ward bosses.

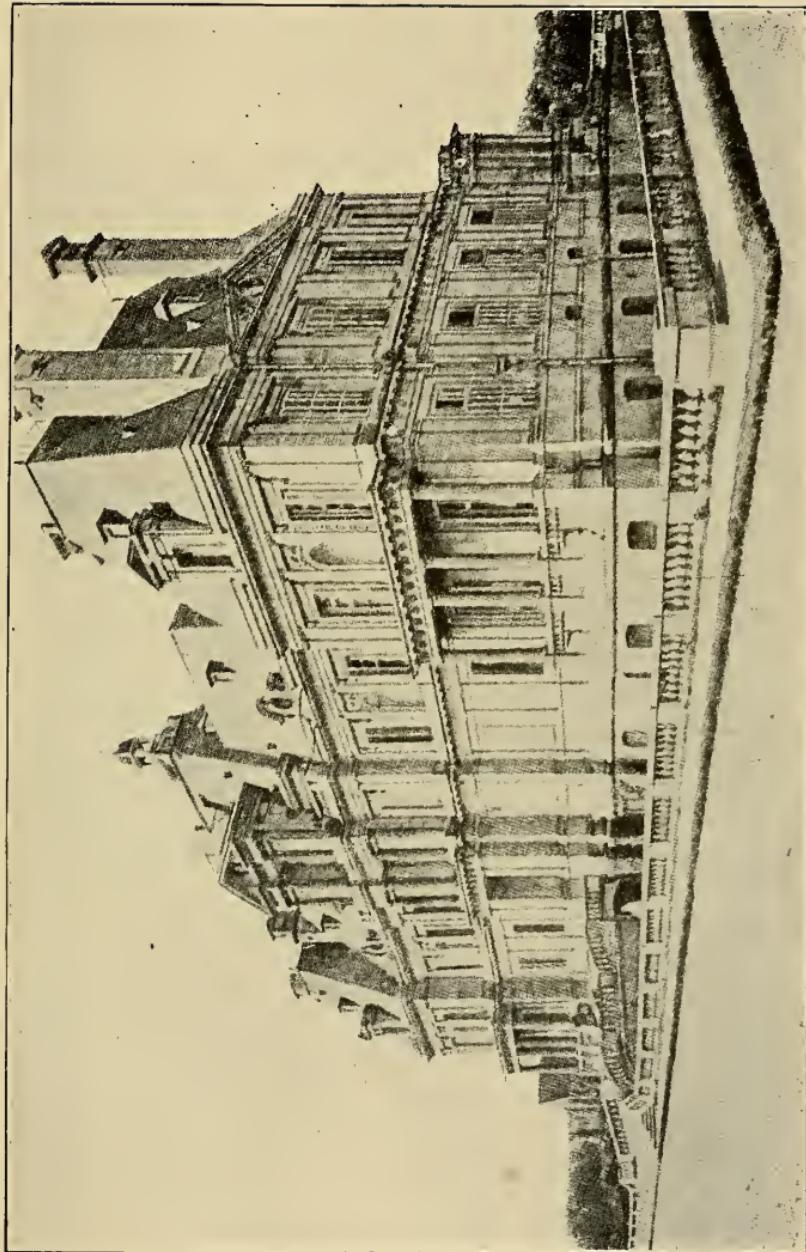
## VII

### THE CHÂTEAU DE MAISONS

NOT long ago the Château of Asay-le-Rideau, a masterpiece of the French art of the sixteenth century, was in peril. Today it is the turn of the Château de Maisons, a masterpiece of the French art of the seventeenth century. But this time it is not a question of a peril which is more or less distant. The destruction of Maisons is a fact which is decided upon. The property has just fallen into the hands of a real estate speculator. He intends to cut up what remains of the park into house lots. As to the château, the wreckers will first rip out the magnificent mantelpieces and the incomparable sculptures which adorn the walls; they will sell them; then they will tear down the building. The fragments will serve to fill the moats, and on the ground thus made level they will build suburban villas.

The Department of Fine Arts looks on powerlessly at this act of abominable vandalism, for the Château de Maisons is not listed as a national

CHÂTEAU DE MAISONS





monument. And not one of those amateurs who spend fortunes every day to buy childish ornaments, restored pictures and ragged tapestries, not a single one of these can be found who will preserve for France one of the monuments which are the glory of French architecture. Not one of those public administrations which incessantly build at enormous expense hospitals, asylums, colleges, has thought that it might be able, by utilizing this vast building, to render at the same stroke a brilliant service to art and to history! It is said that the department of Seine-et-Oise is looking for a site on which to build a hospital; why did it not long ago decide to appropriate the Château de Maisons for this purpose?

It is intolerable to think that one of the most beautiful residences of old France, situated at the very gates of Paris, is going to be stupidly demolished, at a time when the curators of our museums can find the necessary money to purchase archæological curiosities and foreign trifles! (Note 11.) And you will see that, as soon as Maisons is stripped by the house wreckers, it will be found very proper to purchase at great expense for the Louvre a few of the statues and a part of the bas-reliefs which vandals will have been permitted to tear from the place where François Mansart had them placed!

The agony of Maisons will have lasted more than seventy years. It was the banker Laffitte who, after 1830, commenced the work of destruction, made way with the terraces and the cascades which were placed between the château and the Seine, and demolished the great stables, a magnificent building decorated with precious sculptures, which was the marvel of Maisons. It was he who cut up the greater part of the park, five hundred hectares, and cut down the centenarian trees of the domain of the Longueils.

After Laffitte, what remained of Maisons passed to less barbarous hands. Another proprietor tried to restore some beauty to the fragments of park which had been preserved. Even today there remain pretty thickets, a fine greensward, avenues lined with great antique busts, while the château itself is almost intact.

Every Parisian knows, at least by having seen it from the window of a railway train, this superb construction which tomorrow will be no more than a pile of rubble and plaster. It ravishes us by the beauty of its lines, by the happy choice of the site where it is placed, by the just proportion of the architecture to the hillside on which it is seated.

The façade facing the court of honor is composed of two superposed orders. In the pediments of the windows are sculptured eagles, and women,

terminated like sphinxes, as lions or dogs. To the right and left, before the pavilions of the wings, rise two projections which form terraces at the height of the first story. The whole monument has a charming air of nervous elegance.

The vestibule (here was formerly the marvelous grille which today closes the gallery of Apollo in the Louvre) rests on beautiful Doric columns. The vault is decorated, on its four faces, with grand bas-reliefs representing four divinities: never did sculptures show more docility, more suppleness, in clothing architectural forms without overloading them, without injuring the purity of their lines. And everywhere the eagle of the Longueils unfolds its great wings of stone.

In the halls of this devastated château, there remains nothing but the sculptured decoration. But what a masterpiece! Under the strong and intelligent discipline of François Mansart, Gilles Guérin, Buyster, Van Obstal and Sarazin surpassed themselves. The great mantelpiece where, under a medallion of the great Condé, an antique triumph is marshaled, the adorable playing children which Van Obstal carved above the cornice of the grand stone staircase, the noble caryatides which sustain the dome of the bed-chamber, all the decoration of the guardroom where, about 1840, a poor painter called Bidault

painted tiresome views of the Bay of Naples, all the sculptures scattered through the different rooms of the château, form one of the most perfect achievements, if not the most perfect, which the seventeenth century has left us. The wreckers are going to ruin it, they are going to annihilate it.

And they will annihilate also that admirable dining hall where the Count of Artois set up, at the end of the eighteenth century, Houdon's *Ceres*, Boizot's *Vertumnus*, Clodion's *Erigone*, and Foucou's *Flora*. Plaster casts have replaced the originals on the ancient pedestals. But the hall has retained its coffered ceiling, whose bas-reliefs equal, in grace, fancy and richness of invention, the most delicate works of the Renaissance, in surety and simplicity of execution, the purest works of Greek genius. They will find wretches who will pull down these sacred stones with pick and crowbar! And they will also find those who will tear from the little oratory of Maisons its exquisite, its delicious marquetry!

When we wander through the deserted apartments of the old mansion, now devoted to demolition, the heart contracts, and we ask with anger how such vandalism is still possible in a period when everybody, even to the least politician, talks of art and beauty!

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The Château de Maisons was built by François Mansart, between 1642 and 1651, for René de Longueil.

The family of Longueil, originating in Normandy, where its feudal possessions were near Dieppe, possessed the territory of Maisons from the end of the fourteenth century. It has increased it by successive acquisitions.

René de Longueil, Councilor in Parliament, had just been named president of a court, when he commissioned Mansart to build him a new château on his domain. He gave entire freedom to his architect in plan and decoration. It is related that Mansart, after he had built the right wing, leveled it with the ground to begin it over again on a new plan, because he was not satisfied with his work. The expense was enormous: it has been estimated at more than six millions. Maisons, when it was finished, was considered one of the most beautiful châteaux of France. How could Longueil afford this royal fancy? We are very ill-informed on this point today. All that is known is that in 1650 the president was named superintendent of finance; when, shortly afterward, he was dismissed, he was responsible for this charming and significant remark: "They are wrong; I have taken care of my own business; I was about to look out for theirs."

Louis XIV sometimes visited Maisons. He came there unexpectedly with the court, July 10, 1671, fleeing from Saint-Germain, where the Duke of Anjou was dying. Bossuet brought the King the news of the death, and the Queen's fool, Tricomini, transmitted it to Mlle. de Montpensier in these terms: "You, great lords, you will all die like the least of men; here is one who comes to say that your nephew is dead." This fool talked like Bossuet. Mlle. de Montpensier adds that she went to pay her respects to the King and that she wept bitterly with him. "He was deeply afflicted, and with reason, for this child was very pretty."

After the death of René de Longueil, the château passed to his descendants, the last of whom died in 1732. It then passed to the Marquis of Soye-court, who let it fall into ruin; but in 1777 the Count of Artois bought it, restored it, and embellished it magnificently.

We reach the upper stories of the château by a narrow and winding staircase, ensconced in the thickness of the wall. Here is a maze of corridors and tiny chambers. A larger apartment, however, exists in the center of the building, below the lantern which crowns the roof. It is ornamented with mythological paintings and Danaë adorns the ceiling over the bed in the alcove. This is the chamber of Voltaire.



FRANÇOIS MARIE AROUET VOLTAIRE



The great intimacy between Voltaire and the President de Maisons is well known. The latter, great-grandson of the creator of the château, was a studious young man of delicate tendencies. At the age of eighteen he was President of Parliament. He was said to be a good Latinist. His education had been irreligious and he loved science. He had established a chemical laboratory, where he manufactured the most perfect Prussian blue which could be found in Europe, and a botanic garden of rare plants where he cultivated coffee. He belonged to the Academy of Science, and also possessed a collection of coins.

In 1723 Voltaire came to make his home with his friend. He found there a good reception and a society ready to admire him. He knew, above all, that the President was the nephew of Madame de Villars, and Voltaire was then in all the heat of his passion for the Marshal's wife. . . .

He arrived at Maisons in the month of November. He planned to finish his tragedy of *Marianne* in this retreat. But he was immediately taken sick with the smallpox and thought he would die. So he sent for the curate of Maisons and confessed. The Danaë of the alcove possibly heard the confession of Voltaire! Doctor Gervasi saved the dying man by making him drink "two hundred pints of lemonade." As soon as he was cured, to

disembarrass his hosts and not abuse their goodness, Voltaire had himself taken to Paris. Then occurred an episode which almost became tragic. We must let Voltaire tell it:

"I was scarcely two hundred yards from the château when a part of the ceiling of the chamber where I had lain fell in flames. The neighboring chambers, the apartments which were below them, the precious furniture with which they were adorned, all were consumed by the fire. The loss amounted to a hundred thousand livres and, without the help of the engines for which they sent to Paris, one of the most beautiful edifices of the kingdom would have been destroyed. They hid this strange news from me on my arrival; I knew it when I awoke; you cannot imagine how great was my despair; you know the generous care which M. de Maisons had taken of me; I had been treated like a brother in his house, and the reward of so much goodness was the burning of his château. I could not conceive how the fire had been able to catch so suddenly in my chamber, where I had left only an almost extinguished brand. I learned that the cause of this conflagration was a beam which passed exactly under the fireplace. . . . The beam of which I speak had charred little by little from the heat of the hearth. . . .

"Madame and Monsieur de Maisons received the news more tranquilly than I did; their generosity was as great as their loss and as my grief. M. de Maisons crowned his bounty by giving me the news himself in letters which make very evident that he excels in heart as in mind; he occupied himself with the care of consoling me and it almost seemed as if it had been my château which was burned."

And it is not only the shade of Voltaire which haunts the apartments of Maisons! We may also be shown the chamber of Lafayette. In addition, decorations in Empire style recall to us that in 1804 the château was bought and inhabited by Lannes. . . .

But what good is it to evoke these memories, since the admirable beauty of the architecture and of the decorations has not sufficed to arrest the enterprise of the housebreakers? (Note 12.)

## VIII

### THE VALLEY OF THE OISE

WHEN the first automobiles made their appearance upon the highways, some persons thought that, thanks to this new mode of locomotion, the French were finally going to discover the thousand beauties of France. They awoke from their dream when they heard the conversations of automobilists. The latter, when they returned from their excursions, told of the achievements of the engine, the misfortunes of the tires, the treacheries of the road. They computed distances, counted kilometers, passed judgment on macadam; but of the country traversed they had seen, it was manifest, only the wide ribbon of the road unrolling before their cars. If one talked to them of the picturesqueness of a region through which they had passed, they replied: "Too steep grades!"; and they cursed the rough cobbles when one praised to them the pretty church in a village through which they had passed. They were full of stories of autos, as hunters are of hunting yarns; but every one

knows that the beauty of the forest is the last thing a hunter thinks of. The chauffeurs went into ecstasies at the memory of a straight, smooth, deserted highway, drawn like an arrow for leagues across an endless plain, far from the villages which are populated by hens, children and straying dogs. The most romantic celebrated the pleasure of speed, the intoxication of danger. In all of them one guessed, though none would consent to avow it, the wild pride of hurling themselves across the world, with a terrible uproar, in the midst of universal fright, like petty scourges of God.

Some protested, and swore that it is easy to avoid the contagion of this delirium, that they themselves had succeeded in using their machine as a commodious vehicle and not as a simple instrument of sport. I only half believed them. Some experiences had shown me that one feels himself becoming an automobilist an hour after one is seated in an automobile. . . .

But recently one of my friends asserted: "Your experiences prove nothing. You chose your auto badly, or perhaps your chauffeur, or even your companions. Three conditions are indispensable for traveling, or rather for loitering, in an automobile: 1. A firm decision to see everything, which depends on you alone; 2. A docile chauffeur; 3.

A comfortable auto of moderate speed. My chauffeur and my machine fulfil the two latter conditions. Arrange the itinerary yourself. We will stop as often as you please. Will an experience of three days consecrated to archæology seem conclusive to you?"

I proposed to my friend to pass in review all the churches of the Oise Valley from Saint Leu d'Esserent to Noyon. . . . There is not in this part of France a single village whose church is not worthy of a visit. It is the cradle of Gothic art.

My friend was right. You can loiter in an automobile; but it is necessary, to be successful, to be a lover of loafing almost to a mania, and to be a lover of sightseeing until it is a passion.

If you are not sustained by a tenacious and obstinate curiosity, you immediately succumb to the mania of automobilism. Do not speak of the attraction of rapidity; for, to get rid of this, there is a sure and simple means, that of choosing a machine of medium speed. But, whatever may be the rapidity of the machine, you remain exposed to a double obsession. There is at first the search for a good road, the hatred of cobblestones, dirt roads and badly kept pavements; doubtless an automobile, well built and prudently driven, can overcome the most difficult roads; but the fear of jolts and the terror of breakdowns cause us to

see, always and everywhere, the good road, where the machine reaches its maximum of speed. Every detour becomes odious if it compels the abandonment of a smooth road for more dangerous crossroads. The chauffeur is therefore desirous of following blindly the line marked on his special map. (Let us remark in passing that maps for the use of automobilists are generally detestable.) But the essential peculiarity of the state of mind common to automobilists is a disgust with halts. "Keep on, keep on!" a mysterious voice seems to cry to us whenever there comes a desire to stop. Nothing hurries us; we are loafing; we have long hours ahead of us before we reach the end of the day's run; nevertheless the briefest stop seems to be an unnecessary delay. We can no longer admit the idea of immobility; we experience a sort of ennui when trees, houses and men cease their regular flight along both sides of the road. Then we understand how it is that so many automobilists are happy in driving between moving pictures, without looking at anything, and how they get from it a pleasure which is both careless and frenzied.

These are unfortunate circumstances for the contemplation of landscapes and of monuments. It is, however, possible to triumph over them. The slavery of the good road can be escaped. But

do not count upon it without a veritable effort of the will.

If one is master of himself as of his machine, then traveling in an auto becomes delightful, for one can modify, shorten, lengthen, the itinerary of the excursion according to one's fancy. We turn aside at a crossroad to climb a hill, from which we hope to discover an agreeable outlook, or perhaps to visit a church of whose spire, rising in the midst of the woods, a glimpse has been caught. If we perceive that we have passed, without noticing it, a monument or a picturesque site, we turn back. Yes, we turn back. This assertion will leave more than one chauffeur incredulous. But everything is possible when one really has the taste of travel, even to losing two minutes by turning his machine around on a straight road.

This way of traversing the highroads of France has, I admit, its inconveniences, the most serious of which is the necessity of incessantly watching the map to guide the chauffeur at every fork. The signboard always appears too late, when the machine has already made the wrong turn. The speed of the auto is such that it is not possible to study the map and to enjoy the view at the same time. It is necessary to choose. The wisest plan is to make up your mind to miss the road

occasionally. The mistake is so quickly corrected!

I also recognize that traveling in an auto will never replace the slow promenade, in which one stopped at every turn of the route, amused by people and by things. But it has the great advantage of annihilating distance, of bringing sites and monuments close to one another, of permitting rapid comparisons without any effort of memory, and of revealing the general characteristics of a whole region. It suits synthetic minds. It repels a little those who have the passion of analysis. In short it makes us acquainted with the forest, but leaves us ignorant of the beauty of the trees. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

From Paris to Chantilly there is at first the monotonous plateau which separates the valley of the Marne from that of the Oise. In this gently rolling plain the villages are numerous, and everywhere, overlooking the housetops, rise the pointed or saddle-roofed spires of old belfries. There is not a hamlet of the Ile-de-France which does not possess a precious and exquisite church. It is here, on the soil of the royal domain, that the soul of France was formed. It is here that its national art was born.

We will stop, as the luck of the road wills.

Louvres formerly possessed two churches: one

of them has disappeared and of it there remains only a fine Romanesque belfry; in the other, which shows the somewhat absurd elegance of the fifteenth century, we see a frieze of vine leaves running all around the wall. And behold, at the very first stop, in this petty village, a charming résumé of the whole of French art; a robust Romanesque tower, finished in the first period of pointed Gothic and, beside the gray belfry, the excessive and delightful luxury of flamboyant Gothic. A league farther on, the church of Marly-la-Ville offers a perfect example of the art of the thirteenth century; with its little flying buttresses and its low triforium, one might say that it was the tiny model for a great cathedral. By the side of the road, a poor half-ruined shed, with a broken roof, a hollowed pavement and moldy walls, is the church of Fosses; in its misery and its degradation, the humble nave of the twelfth century still preserves some remnants of its pure beauty. . . .

A glance at the pleasing Renaissance façade of the church of Luzarches. . . . The automobile rolls along the edge of the forest. . . . Villas of horsebreeders and jockeys. . . . Some English cottages. . . . The immense greensward and the very uneven cobbled street of Chantilly. . . . A few more woods, and we behold the wide valley of the Oise.

On the opposite hill rises the church of Saint-Leu-d'Esserent, on a large terrace, above the houses and the gardens of the town. The apse turned toward the Oise, the robust flying buttresses and the radiating chapels, two great square towers which flank the choir, the tower of the porch with its tapering steeple, the grand and harmonious mass of the edifice, all give to this church the aspect of a proud and gracious citadel.

Saint-Leu-d'Esserent is one of the most moving types of the architecture of the twelfth century, of that architecture which is called transitional. The façade is still semi-Romanesque, but its openings are already finer and more numerous. Internally, the mixture of Romanesque and pointed gives to the monument an extraordinarily varied aspect; the arches which separate the nave from the low side aisles are broken; the full semicircle reappears in the triforium, and in the upper windows the arch is pointed again. The vaulting is formed by the intersection of pointed arches; but in the chapels of the apse there are trilobes inscribed in circular arches. And this diversity of styles is here the result neither of gropings nor of fresh starts; it results from a marvelously conceived plan in which the builders knew how to mingle and harmonize the beauties of tradition and the audacities of the

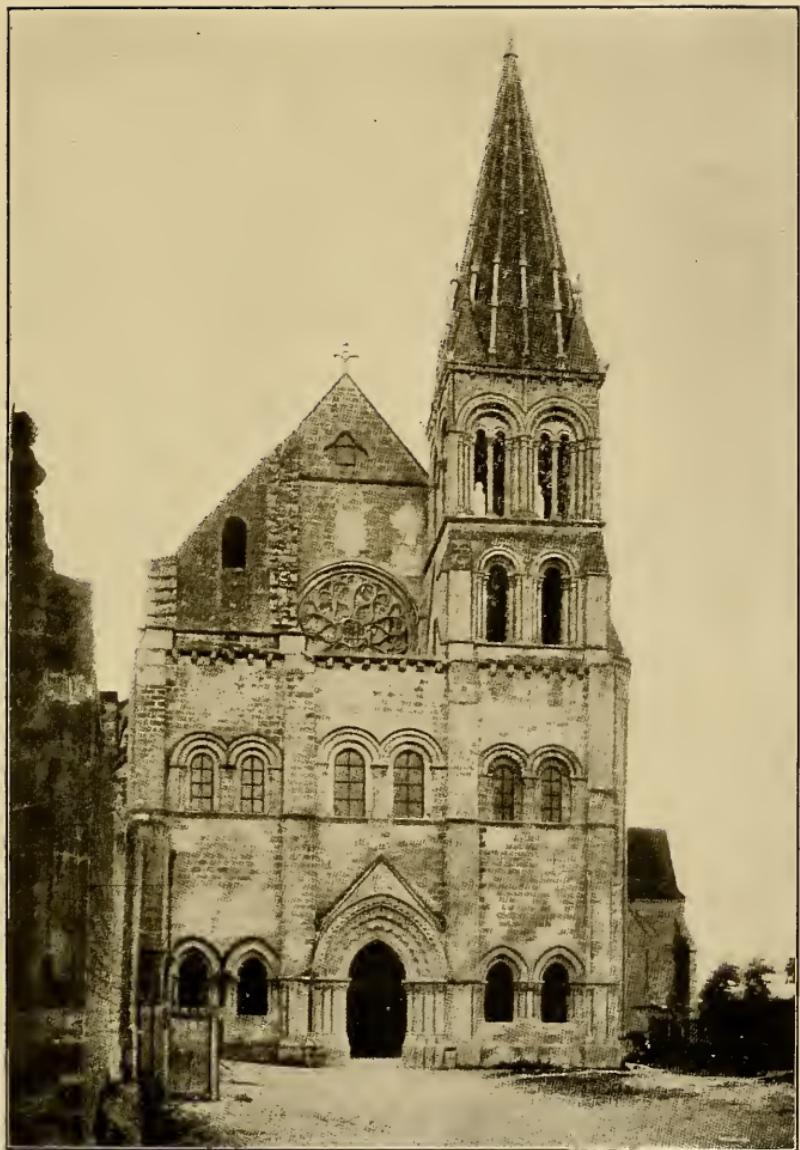
new art. The Romanesque architecture had no period of decadence and, on the other hand, at the period when Saint-Leu-d'Esserent was built, the time of research and of trial whence emerged the pointed architecture was already past. It is the meeting of the two styles which renders so magnificent certain churches of the twelfth century, such as Saint-Leu-d'Esserent and Noyons.

The ambulatory of the choir was enriched in a free and infinitely harmonious style; the columns and the capitals, even as early as this, show an admirable purity of style.

Saint-Leu-d'Esserent was an important priory of the Cluniac order. Some arcades of the cloister still adhere to the wall of the church. Other remains of the monastery exist on private property. We would have been pleased to visit them. The proprietor answered us: "It is impossible; this is the day I dry my washing." An inhabitant of Saint-Leu-d'Esserent said to us a few moments later, in a mysterious tone: "The monks were rich. There is buried treasure there. That man is sifting all the soil on his land: he is looking for gold. . . ." (Saint-Leu is sixty kilometers from Paris.)

\* \* \* \* \*

For two days we are going to follow the valley where the river slowly coils its long bends through



CHURCH OF SAINT-LEU-D'ESSERENT



the wheat fields and the poplars. The low hills, covered with forests, lie in the distance and never come near enough to force the Oise to sudden detours. This river is not like the Marne, incessantly turned aside by the spur of a hill. It flows indolently under a pale horizon, in a vast landscape whose shades are infinitely delicate, and whose lines are infinitely soft. It bears silent barges through the fertile plains. Daughter of the north, it reflects in its clear green waters villages of brick. The smoke of workshops mingles with the mist-banks of its sky. At night the lights of the glass furnaces brighten its banks. By talking with the men who drive their horses upon the towpath, it is easy to guess that the Oise is born in Belgium.

Bell-towers dot the valley on both banks of the river. That of Montataire rises above the trees of a park at the top of a bluff. The church possesses an exquisite portal surmounted by a frightfully mutilated bas-relief of the Annunciation; but how much grace the draperies still possess!

It is useless to stop at Creil, since a barbarous municipality thought it advisable to pull down the church of Saint Évremont, one of the most beautiful specimens of the architecture of the twelfth century.

The people of Nogent-les-Vierges are not bar-

barians: they have preserved their church. It is not as pure in style as that of Saint Évremont. But its belfry — terribly restored — is adorned with original details. The rectangular choir, which the thirteenth century added to the Romanesque nave, possesses a rare elegance, with its slender pillars. What a diversity there is in the creations of Gothic architecture! How inventions in construction permitted infinite variation in the plans of churches! It is only by thus traversing the countrysides of France that one can admire the abundant imagination of the builders of the thirteenth century. There are many churches, especially in the north, which, like that of Nogent-les-Vierges, possess a choir terminated by a flat wall. But the type is diversified from edifice to edifice. Open a manual of archæology; take the most recent and the most complete of all, that of M. Enlart, and you will observe what difficulty the author has in classing and characterizing such work, after the last years of the twelfth century. At no other period was architecture so profoundly individual an art. We may say that every building was then original, not only in the details, but especially in the plan.

I have written that the people of Nogent-les-Vierges were not barbarians, but I am on the point of taking it back, when I think of a sort of

panoramic Calvary which they have installed in their beautiful church. Let them look at this picture which might seem beautiful to a Kanaka: then let them look at the two beautiful bas-reliefs of the fifteenth century which are placed at the extremity of the nave, and let them blush!

A little farther on, the church of Villers-Saint-Paul also possesses a Romanesque nave on low, squat pillars, and a Gothic choir whose columns expand into wide branches of stone. This choir is square, like that of Nogent-les-Vierges. The two villages are only a league apart; without doubt only a few years separated the two buildings, yet it will always be impossible for us to confound these two churches in our memory!

Rieux also had its Romanesque nave and its Gothic choir. The nave has been made into a schoolhouse. As to the choir, it is being restored, but the orientation of the altar is being changed in the process, so that the width of the choir becomes the length of the church. And they are executing this lovely transformation without any thought of the ancient plans, or any more respect for the wishes of the dead who, buried under the pavement of the sanctuary, will no longer occupy the position with respect to the altar in which they had wished to rest forever.

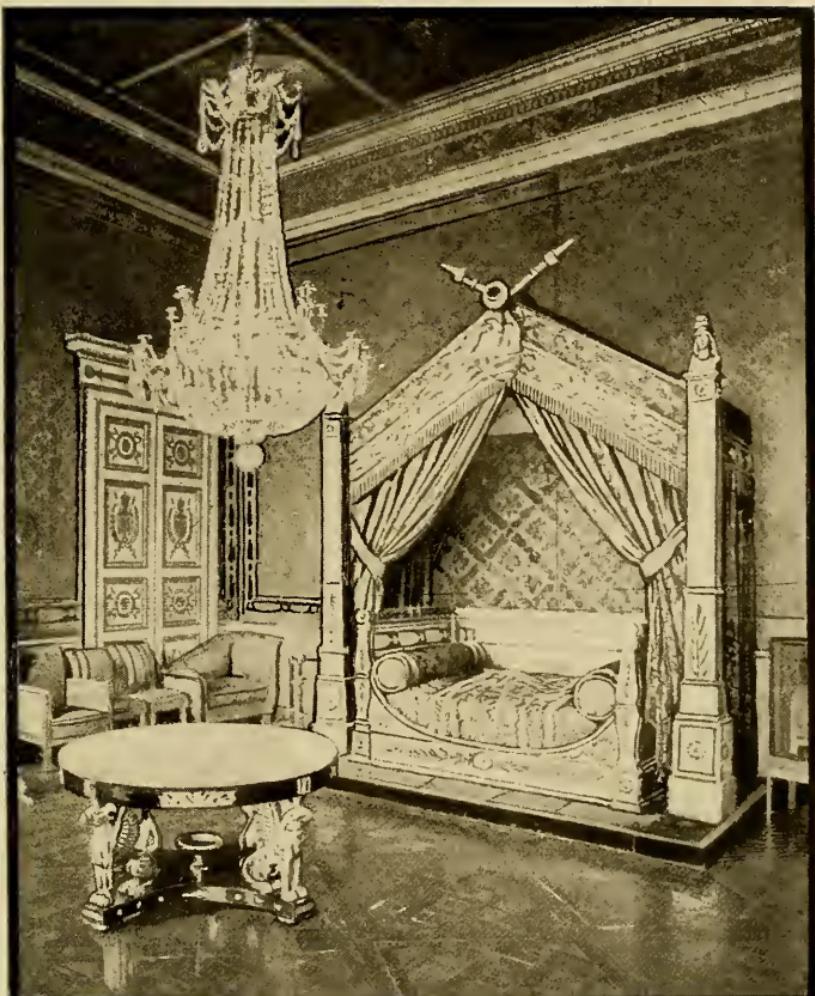
On the left bank of the Oise, Pont-Sainte-

Maxence: a pointed-arched church of the Renaissance, heavy, massive. This type of architecture, which has produced so many elegant works in Normandy, has been less happy in the Isle of France. Pontpoint: a Romanesque nave, a pointed choir, at the end of which they have preserved an old apse of the eleventh century, and these patchings are delightful! We salute at the portal of the church of Verberie an adorable statue of the Virgin. We cross back to the right bank of the Oise to admire the stone steeple of Venette, pleasingly planted on the pedestal of a Romanesque tower: we reach Compiègne.

\* \* \* \* \*

Compiègne has a beautiful château which everybody knows, and Compiègne is a charming town which many sojourners do not know. More than one traveler has gone through it without ever having seen the chapel of the ancient Hôtel-Dieu, whose grand reredos of carved wood is one of the most brilliant masterpieces of the French sculpture of the seventeenth century.

Compiègne possesses a historical society, which shows much zeal in causing the preservation of the appearance and the monuments of the old town. Let us praise in passing the efforts of these worthy men: we must not lose a chance for exalting the good and saying evil of the wicked. On one



From a drawing by Blanche McManus

NAPOLEON'S BEDCHAMBER, CHÂTEAU DE COMPIÈGNE



occasion this historical society intervened to prevent that, under pretext of straightening a line, the remnants of an old bastion should be destroyed because they injured, it was said, the beautiful perspective of the subprefecture. It also undertook the defense of the old tower called the Tower of Joan of Arc, and succeeded in saving this venerable monument. Alas, it did not succeed in protecting the bridge of Compiègne against the engineers who wrapped it up in an iron apron, under pretext of facilitating traffic. . . . Yes, the traffic of the bridge of Compiègne!

\* \* \* \* \*

From belfry to belfry, we continue our route toward Noyon.

At the junction of the Aisne, in a pleasing landscape, the church of Choisy-au-Bac seems to watch over the tombs of a little cemetery filled with flowers. It is Romanesque, fairly well restored, and charmingly picturesque.

At Longueil-sous-Thourotte, the poor old church is about to disappear. By its side they have built a grand new church, a copy of twelfth-century architecture. Was it worth while to demolish the modest and venerable edifice of earlier days? Could it not be preserved beside the proud modern construction, even if it were tottering and dilapidated? It contained beautiful funeral slabs of the

Renaissance, which are going to be exiled, no one knows where; it contained, above all, superb stained glass of the thirteenth century. Two windows have been placed in the new church; but there remains a third, and there remain also remarkable monochromatic frescoes. What is going to be done with these precious remnants? They have not been listed as national treasures.

. . . Tomorrow, perhaps, they will go to decorate the dining room of a Chicago millionaire: what a disgrace! And all the windows of the new church are adorned with stained glass whose banal horror makes the magnificence of these ancient windows apparent to every eye!

The church of Thourotte — it is of the twelfth century, but has lost much of its character — contains a fine altar screen of gilded wood, representing the different scenes of the Passion. It is said to be Flemish work; judging by the types of certain personages, this might be doubted; but the shutters which close upon the screen bear paintings whose origin is not in the least doubtful. Poor paintings, whose restoration was confided by a too-zealous curate to a pitiable dauber! Now, the Commission of Historic Monuments has listed the beautiful sculptures and has put them under glass: the effect of this is abominable, but we live among barbarians and second-hand

dealers, and we are actually forced to put our works of art under lock and key to defend them. As for the painted shutters, they are hung up on the wall: a few were spared by the dauber. In the same church we may still see two beautiful altars supported by torsos of the seventeenth century. How many beautiful works of art still remain in our little churches of France, in spite of revolutions and dealers in antiques!

The Cistercian abbey of Ourscamp is now a cotton spinning mill. Behind a magnificent iron fence stretch vast buildings of the seventeenth century. In the center rises a grand pavilion. We pass through an open door between the high columns which support the balcony of the upper story, and suddenly discover that this immense construction is a mere veneer to hide the old church of the monastery. Of the nave there is no longer anything remaining; but a little farther on, in the midst of the park, the choir still lifts its arches of magnificently pure architecture. The roof has fallen, but the columns and the walls still stand. It is a picture like that of the church of Longpont, in the forest of Villers-Cotterets. (There is also great similarity between the architecture of Longpont and that of Ourscamp.) It seems that the intimate beauty of Gothic art is better revealed to us when we thus discover the ruin of one of its

masterpieces among the trunks and branches of trees; we then can better feel the living grace of its columns and the freedom of its arches. . . . There is so much truth in this admirable page from the *Génie du christianisme*: "The forests of the Gauls have passed in their turn into the temples of our fathers, and our forests of oak have thus maintained their sacred origin. These vaults carved into foliage, these jambs which support the walls and end suddenly like broken trunks, the coolness of the vaults, the darknesses of the sanctuary, the obscure wings, the secret passages, the lowly doorways, all retrace the labyrinths of the woods in the Gothic church: everything makes us feel in it religious horror, mysteries and divinity, etc. . . ." The centuries have accomplished their work, and, in the ruins of the edifice, which is surrounded and invaded by the verdure of the forest, we recognize still better what art learns from nature. (Note 13.)

Of the old abbey, there still remains a superb hall with Gothic vaults and a triple nave. It is called the "Hall of the Dead," because it is said that the bodies of the monks were placed there for two days before the funeral. So great a room for this use? Was it not rather the chapter room of the monastery?

I will say nothing of Noyon today. On another



CHURCH OF TRACY-LE-VAL



occasion we will return to this lovable and silent town, which is adorned with one of the most perfect religious edifices of our country.

\* \* \* \* \*

Upon the return trip, in the forest and valleys adjacent to the valley of the Oise, the obedient auto stopped before many other exquisite churches.

The belfry of Tracy-le-Val is one of the pearls of French art. The tower rests upon a square sub-basement; when it has reached the height of the apse, two long, narrow windows open upon each side, framed by little columns of adorably fine workmanship, and monsters and grotesques grimace on all sides under the arches and upon the capitals. Above these strange details, the tower suddenly becomes octagonal, but, to mask the abrupt change in the architectural scheme, statues with outstretched wings are placed at the four angles. A conical tower of stone crowns this strange belfry, twice admirable, by the richness of its decoration and by the grace of its proportions.

Saint-Jean-aux-Bois, in the midst of the forest of Compiègne, is a church of the twelfth century which the restorers have rebuilt. Perhaps it will still interest a few archæologists by the originality of its plan: designed in the form of a Latin cross, its crossarms have double bays, like the

nave; but this singularity of construction is the only merit which the church retains today: it is clean, new, frozen and dead.

Morienval, with its three towers, its triple nave, and its ambulatory, is a beautiful church. In the interminable controversies which have raged over the date and the place of the origin of the Gothic style, Morienval has been cited a hundred times, and it has been much discussed because of its ambulatory, which is vaulted with pointed arches and which certain historians affirm to have been built in the middle of the eleventh century. . . . I do not know. But what I know well, is that, in future controversies, one will do well to hold to the texts and to the drawings, and not to attempt to reason from the monument itself; for this exists no longer, or at least it is *restored*, which amounts to the same thing. Yes, they have restored the ambulatory of Morienval, and they have not half restored it, I can assure you. For they have completely recarved certain capitals. . . . It is truly a singular spectacle to see in the twentieth century so many stone carvers occupied, some in producing Romanesque, others Gothic, and still others classical architecture. It is also diverting to think of the mistakes into which future archæologists will fall, led astray by all these copies. But, in spite of all, as it is the

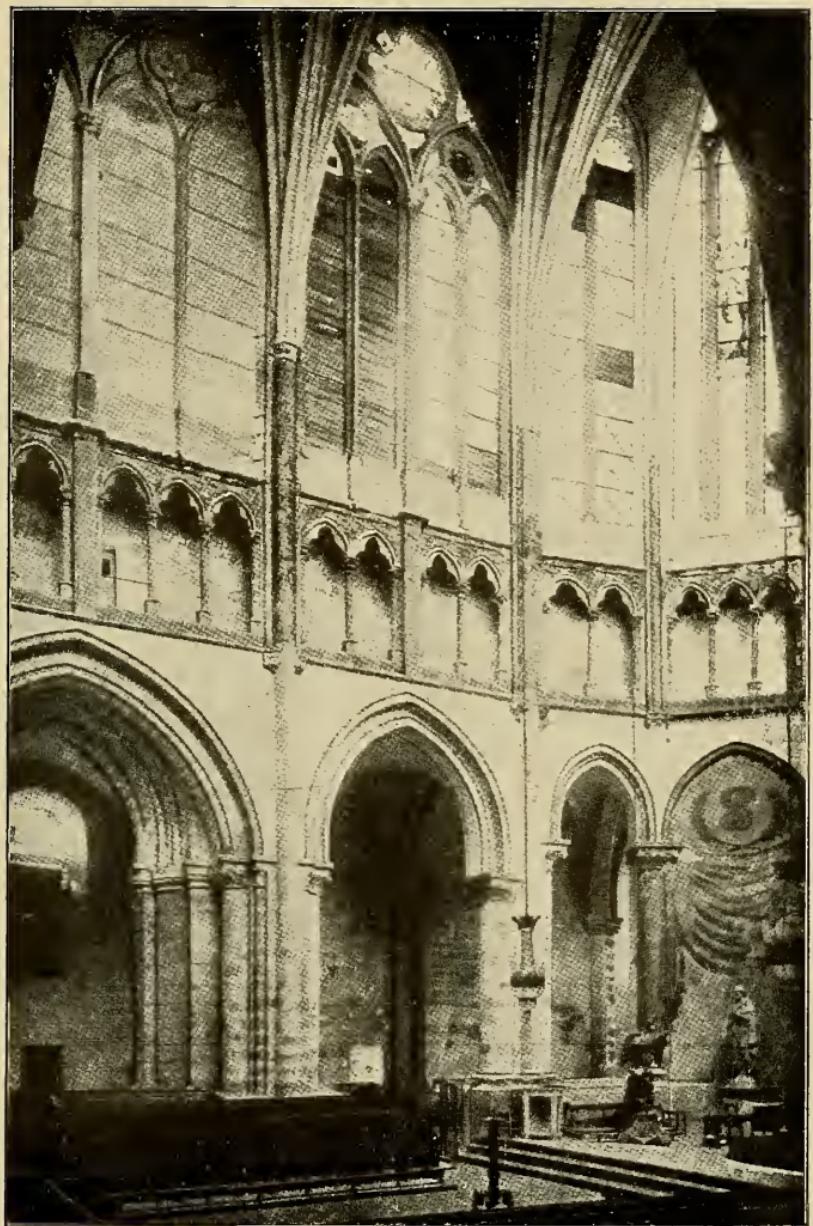
old monuments which pay for these debauches of sculpture, as it is at the expense of their conservation that this fury of restoration is exercised, we would willingly renounce these ironical joys. Oh, if the restorers would only consecrate each year to the placing of tiles or slates the sums which they squander in having capitals recarved!

Since the fancy of this archæological excursion has taken me into the valley of the Authonne, a pretty name for a pretty brook, I desire to see that château of Vez which its owner, M. Dru, recently bequeathed to the nation. It is a magnificent fortress on the summit of a wooded hill. The donjon and the encircling wall have been skillfully restored. Of the main body of the building, of which only ruins remain, a part only was rebuilt by M. Dru. . . . Will the nation accept the legacy? I hope so, because it appears that M. Dru left a sum sufficient to finish the work. This sort of archæological restitution seems to me very unnecessary; it would be far better to leave such things to theatrical scene builders. But it is not necessary to discourage the worthy who diminish the profits of the house wreckers by bequeathing their castles to the public.

Irony of geographical names! At the foot of the hill which sustains the donjon of Vez, we see, in the midst of the fields, a Gothic church of the

flamboyant period, remnant of a Premonstratensian monastery. It is now used as a farmstead. I consult my map to know the name of the hamlet: it is called *Lieu-Restauré* (Restored Place).

I took the road back to Paris through the great plains of Valois, overlooked by the sublime spire of the cathedral of Senlis.



INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF GALLARDON



## IX

### GALLARDON

ALLARDON, a town of the region of Chartres, is built upon the spur formed by the valleys of the Ocre and the Voise, two of those narrow and sinuous ravines, clothed with trembling alders and poplars, which traverse the immense plateau of La Beauce. The houses rise, stage above stage, on the side of the hill; then, at the summit of the slope, commences the endless plain, the ocean of harvests, dotted with the whirling iron arms of water-pumping windmills, where the towers of the cathedral of Chartres are dimly seen above the horizon. Gallardon was formerly a strong defensive position, and the ruin of its old donjon, "the shoulder of Gallardon," still sketches curious outlines against the sky. Gallardon possesses a remarkable church, whose choir is a marvel of elegance, and whose nave is covered with a beautiful vault of painted wood. It also boasts of a beautiful Renaissance house. . . . Finally, it is noted for the richness of its fields and above all for the excellence of its beans.

But, today, neglecting the picturesque, archæological and horticultural merits of Gallardon, I wish to tell the story of a singular personage who was born in this tiny village of La Beauce, Thomas Ignatius Martin, a visionary laborer, known under the name of Martin of Gallardon. (Note 14.)

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1816, the White Terror reigned in La Beauce as in other places. Gallardon had not escaped the fever which torments the least village of France on the morrow of every revolution. Conquered and furious, the Liberals met in the hall of an inn to exchange their regrets and their rancors; with airs of bravado they evoked the memories of the Revolution and the glories of the Empire. Opposite them, and in opposition to them, the Royalist Committee celebrated the victory of its party and exploited it. It annoyed and threatened its adversaries, bombarded the Chamber with petitions, and the ministers with denunciations. It was the appointed hour for all reprisals, all enthusiasms and all credulities.

Thomas Ignatius Martin was born at Gallardon of a family of small farmers who had been known there from time immemorial. He was thirty-three years old and the father of four children. He was a robust, simple, upright, easy-going and open-hearted citizen. In the midst of aroused passions

he had never mixed in political affairs. On the testimony of the mayor of Gallardon, "the Revolution always seemed to displease him, especially on account of the disorders which it caused, in which he never took part. He remained tranquil in all these events, even on the 20th of March, when Bonaparte returned; he seemed, however, to be angry at the banishment of the King; but he also took tranquilly the return of the King in the month of July, rejoicing at it, but without ostentation." In short, he was a wise man. He fulfilled his religious duties exactly, but without fervor, went to mass, kept Lent, read nothing but his prayer book and when, passing by his fields, the curate asked of him: "How goes the work?" he replied: "Much obliged, M. Curé, it goes well." He was never seen at the tavern.

Now, on February 15, 1816, about half-past two in the afternoon, Thomas was in his fields busy in spreading manure on his land, when he suddenly saw an unknown man appear before him. This man, who appeared to be about five feet two inches high, was slim of figure, with a tapering, delicate and very white face; he was enveloped to his feet in a long frock coat of *blonde* color, was shod with boots tied with strings, and wore a high silk hat. He said to Martin in a very gentle voice:

"It is necessary that you should go to see the King; that you should say to him that his life is in danger, as well as that of the princes; that evil men are still attempting to overturn the government; that several writings or letters are already in circulation in some provinces of his States on this subject; that it is necessary that he shall have an exact and general watch kept in all his States, and especially in the capital; that it is also necessary that he should exalt the day of the Lord, that it may be kept holy; that this holy day is misused by a great portion of his people; that it is necessary that he shall cause public works to stop on that day; that he shall cause public prayers to be ordered for the conversion of the people; that he shall exhort them to penitence; that he shall abolish and annihilate all the disorders which are committed on all the days which precede the holy forty days of Lent: that if he does not do all these things, France will fall into new evils. It is necessary that the King should behave towards his people as a father to his child who deserves to be punished; that he shall punish a small number of the most culpable among them to intimidate the others. If the King does not do what is said, there will be made so great a hole in his crown that this will bring him entirely to ruin."

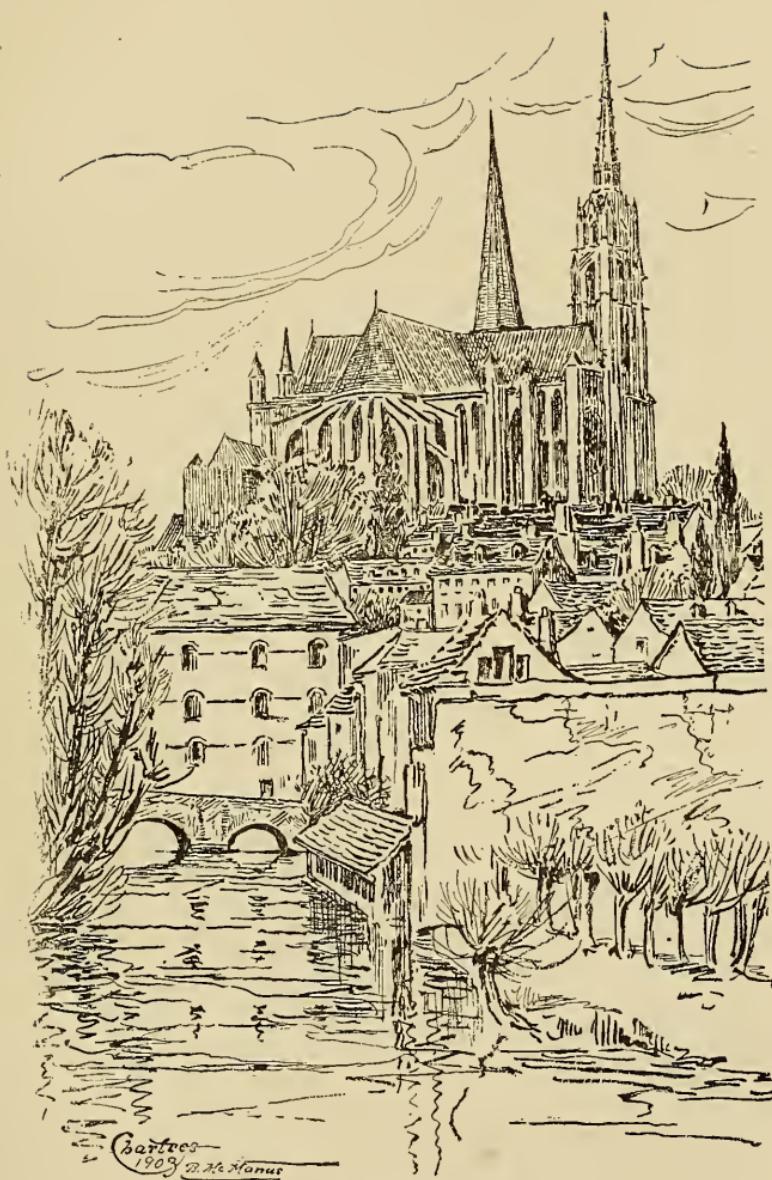
To this discourse Martin replied very judiciously: "But you can certainly go away and find others than me to undertake such a commission as that." "No," replied the unknown, "it is you who shall go." Martin replied still more judiciously: "But since you know it so well, you can indeed go yourself to find the King and say all that to him; why do you address yourself to a poor man like me, who does not know how to explain himself?" The unknown showed himself inflexible: "It is not I," said he, "who shall go, it will be you; pay attention to what I say to you, for you shall do all that I command you." Then his feet appeared to lift from the earth, his head to sink, his body to shrink, and the apparition disappeared. A mysterious force prevented Martin from quitting his field and made him finish his work much more rapidly than was usual.

When he returned to Gallardon, Martin went to his priest to relate the adventure to him. The curate, who was called M. Laperruque, advised him to eat, drink and sleep well, without worrying about this chimera. But, on the following day, the unknown presented himself on several occasions before the more and more frightened peasant, and repeated to him the order to go and find the King.

Martin, on the advice of the curate, visited the

Bishop of Versailles, who questioned him and sent him back to Gallardon. A new apparition: the unknown declares that he will not tell his name, that he is sent from heaven, and that if Martin is chosen above all to speak to Louis XVIII, "it is to lower pride." From this day he does not cease to lecture Martin: "It is not necessary to believe that it is by the will of men that the usurper came last year, it is to punish France. . . . France is in a state of delirium: it shall be delivered to all sorts of evils. . . ." At the same time he warned him "that he would be led before the King, that he would discover to him *the secret things of the period of his exile*, but that the knowledge of them would only be given to him at the moment when he would be introduced into the King's presence." Whether he cultivates his fields, or whether he remains in the barn to thresh his wheat, the unfortunate farmer always finds himself in the presence of the haunting apparition.

Meanwhile, the curate Laperruque corresponds with the Bishop of Versailles, who corresponds with the Minister of Police. The latter requests the prefect of Eure-et-Loir to verify "if these apparitions, said to be miraculous, were not rather a flight of the imagination of Martin, a veritable illusion of his exalted spirit; or if possibly



Chartres  
1903 D. H. Stannus

NOTRE DAME DE CHARTRES



the pretended apparition, or perhaps Martin himself, ought not to be severely questioned by the police and then turned over to the courts."

Warned by the unknown that he is soon going to appear "before the first magistrate of his arrondissement," Martin repairs to Chartres with his curate, and goes to see the prefect; he relates to him his visions, announces himself as ready to repeat the story of them to the Minister of Police and to the King himself, and on March 7, at five o'clock in the morning, departs from Chartres by the diligence, in the company of M. André, lieutenant of gendarmes. They both arrive at Paris at half-past five and take rooms at the Hôtel de Calais, Rue Montmartre.

On the next morning, the lieutenant of gendarmes takes his man to the General Police Headquarters. In the courtyard, the unknown appears again to Martin: "You are going," says he, "to be questioned in several ways; have neither fear nor inquietude, but tell the things as they are." It is nine o'clock; the minister, M. Decazes, has not yet arisen. A secretary makes Martin undergo a preliminary interrogatory. The latter allows himself to be neither intimidated nor disconcerted. Then he is introduced into the private room of the minister, to whom he relates again the series of apparitions, and describes the countenance and

the clothing of the unknown. "Well," the minister then says to him, "you will see him no more, for I am going to have you arrested and taken to prison." This news leaves Martin very incredulous. . . . And, having returned to the Hôtel de Calais, he again hears the unknown assure him that the police have no power over him, and that it is high time to warn the King.

The minister begins to be embarrassed. It is evident that the words of the unknown are not unlike — even to style — the discourses uttered by M. de Marcellus, M. de Chateaubriand, the ultras who meet every evening in the Rue Thérèse, in the salon of M. Piet, in short, all the enemies of M. Decazes. On the other hand, the simplicity of Martin, his air of frankness, the concordance of his stories, all preclude the idea of an imposture. Could this peasant, then, be playing a part in some political machination? But it is impossible to discover who could be the instigators of the mystification. M. Decazes, to get to the bottom of the affair, then orders Pinel, physician in chief of the Salpêtrière, to repair to the Hôtel de Calais and examine the individual in question. After a long conversation, Pinel decides that Martin is afflicted with an "intermittent alienation"; then he reflects and writes to the minister that the wisest course is to take the subject to Charenton

for a few days, in order that it may be possible to observe him and pronounce upon his case.

Meanwhile, the unknown continues to appear to Martin and to announce to him the worst catastrophes. Suddenly, on March 10, he decides to reveal his name: "I had told you that my name would remain unknown; but, since incredulity is so great, it is necessary that I discover my name to you; I am the Archangel Raphael, an angel very celebrated at the throne of God; I have received the power to strike France with all sorts of plagues." And he adds that peace will not return to France before the year 1840. These words terrify Martin.

Three days later, the lieutenant of gendarmes causes him to enter a hired carriage and, under pretext of a drive, conducts him to Charenton. Martin, however, displays no astonishment at this: the supernatural voice has warned him of it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Martin remained about three weeks at Charenton, observed and studied very closely by Doctor Royer-Collard, chief physician of the hospital. He set down his observations and his conclusions in a long report, which he signed with Pinel. It is from this document that I have just related the first visions of Martin.

This report gives us a high idea of the prudence,

the method and the scruples of the physicians who prepared it. As we read these clear and judicious pages, we are obliged to recognize that if the science of mental maladies has made little progress since 1816, the specialists resort to boldness of diagnosis and obscurities of language which Pinel and Royer-Collard knew nothing of. These two doctors knew that their work would pass under the King's eyes, and they doubtless put particular care into it. Nevertheless, not one of our most famous alienists would consent today to sign such an avowal of uncertainty, nor, above all, to express his doubts and reserves in a fashion as limpid and as intelligible, without once dissimulating by a barbarous jargon the fragility of his knowledge.

The doctors begin by an exposition of the facts, the apparitions of the archangel, the confidences of Martin to his curate, his trip to Paris and his arrival at Charenton. They report that after having submitted him to a detailed examination, they had found in him no sign of malady nor any symptom of derangement of mind: he is sound of body, reasons well, manifests neither overexcitement nor violence; he accepts his internment with resignation and asks only that he be permitted to accomplish his mission, for he continues to receive the visits and the admonitions of the

archangel. We shall see that he finally obtained entry to the presence of the King. But let us see first, according to expert medical testimony, whether Martin was an impostor or an illuminate.

"If Martin is an impostor," say the doctors, "he can have become so only in one of two ways: either by imagining his rôle alone and executing it without any outside assistance, or by obeying the influence of other persons more enlightened than himself and by receiving their counsel and their instruction."

The physicians discard the first hypothesis; what they themselves have observed of the character of Martin and what they have learned through information brought from Gallardon, prevents their believing in trickery. "Martin was the last man in the world whom one would suspect of forming a project such as this and of cleverly bringing together all the parties to it; he did not have the religious and political acquaintances which this requires, and he would never have been able to compose by himself alone the discourses which he assures us were addressed to him; but even supposing, contrary to all probability, that he might have been capable of conceiving such a plan, his skill would have come to an end at the first difficulty of execution. Let us imagine him in this contingency face to face with the different

persons who have questioned him; let one oppose his inexperience to their penetration, his ignorance to the artifice of their questions, his timidity to the impression of respect which the exercise of authority always calls forth, and let one ask one's self if he would not have been disconcerted a score of times and fallen into the traps which were laid for him in all directions. Let us add that, if he had only been an adroit rogue, he would have infallibly sought to turn this roguery to his own profit by making it a means of fortune or of credit. Now, he has not dreamed for a single instant of taking advantage of the extraordinary things which happened to him; he has not even been willing to accept a small sum of money which was offered him for his traveling expenses; he has never worked to acquire partisans, and finally, he has returned to his village as simple and with as little pretension as before. Has one ever seen rogues so disinterested?"

Must we believe that Martin is not the sole author of the imposture and that he was guided by outside advice? The physicians combat equally this hypothesis which would have made policemen smile in the beginning. Here is their reasoning, and it is very strong: "To admit this second hypothesis, it is necessary to admit also that a certain number of men, attached to some

political or religious faction and knowing Martin directly or indirectly, should have entered into close relations with him at some time before January 15, and have continued these relations from January 15 up to the time of Martin's removal to Paris, and also in Paris itself, during the sojourn which he made there, and even at Charenton during the three weeks which he passed there. . . . Without these precautions, Martin, abandoned to himself and now obedient only to vague and insufficient guidance, would not have been able to escape the perils which surrounded him. . . . Previous to January 15, Martin associated only with his family or the people of his village; he has never been known to have had any acquaintance or association with persons of a higher class; consequently he has not had them; for in a village nothing remains secret; every one knows what his neighbor is doing. From January 15 up to the time of his removal to Paris, the most authentic reports certify that he has seen only his curate, the Bishop of Versailles and the prefect of Eure-et-Loir, and we know exactly what passed between them and Martin. In the journey from Gallardon to Paris, and during the stay which he made in that city, Martin was accompanied by an officer of gendarmes who left him neither by day nor by night, and who affirms that, with the exception

of M. Pinel, no one at all has had an interview with him. As to Charenton, we certify that he there met only three strangers: one was the commandant and the two others [M. Sosthène de La Rochefoucauld and the Abbé Dulondel, sent by the Archbishop of Rheims, to whom the King had entrusted the care and the solution of the Martin affair], discreet persons, incapable of becoming the instruments of trickery; that all three have had communication with Martin only in the presence of the director, and that they were rigorously restricted to addressing a few questions to him without making any kind of insinuation. . . . Martin talked of his visions neither to the patients, nor to the attendants, nor to the gardeners. Besides, no letter, no advice, had reached him from outside. . . ." Then Martin is neither an impostor nor an accomplice in an imposture. He thus *actually experienced the sensations which he reports.*

Having established the sincerity of Martin, the physicians asked themselves how his intellectual condition should be characterized.

Martin is the puppet of hallucinations. Therefore his affection approaches insanity in certain characteristics. "It is for this reason," adds Royer-Collard, "that M. Pinel and myself did not hesitate at first sight to regard this affection

as a particular kind of insanity, and it is probable that any other physician would have thought as we do on this point. But if Martin's affection approaches insanity in some particulars, it also differs from it in important and basic respects. . . .”

What were they? “In the case of ordinary mental patients, the hallucination of the senses is almost always led up to and brought on by causes which have acted strongly upon their imagination, or disturbed more or less the exercise of their intellectual faculties; it never manifests itself without a special concentration of efforts of the attention or the imagination upon a single idea or upon a particular series of ideas, at least in the period which immediately precedes the vision.” Now, in Martin’s case, there is nothing like this. He has religious visions, although he had a mind little inclined to the mystic and was even a rather lukewarm Christian. His visions relate to politics, yet he was a stranger to the passions of his fellow citizens and did not read the newspapers. Among ordinary insane, visions are always accompanied by a certain ecstatic exaltation which gives the seer the attitude of the inspired, of the prophet, and never permit him to relate his visions with calmness and tranquillity. Now Martin remains constantly the same. He confides his visions only to his superiors, he appears more annoyed than

glorified by them, he relates them with simplicity; he is not turned for one instant from his habitual occupations. Singular coincidences justified certain of the prophecies of Martin: "If it is necessary to make use of the testimony of the officer of gendarmes who accompanied him, Martin announced to him in the morning the visit which M. Pinel was to make in the afternoon, without there being any way in which he could learn of this. . . . We are equally assured that he had actually written to his brother under date of March 12, to warn him that the authorities were going to have information collected in his neighborhood, in regard to the persons with whom he habitually associated there, while the letter by which these inquiries were ordered was not written until the sixteenth of the same month. . . ." Pinel and Royer-Collard willingly admit that there exist "incontestable occurrences of previsions and presentiments which were later realized by the event." But what appears not less certain "is that these occurrences are met with only in the case of persons who enjoy all their faculties and never among the mentally afflicted. This is a side of our nature which remains inexplicable to us even to this day and which will probably long escape our researches." Finally, Martin is distinguished by his excellent health from other

hallucinate insane, who are always the victims of physical troubles.

What can then be the nature of this condition, so individual and so different from insanity as it is usually observed?

I have had to abridge this long scientific discussion, but I will copy the conclusions of the report verbatim:

"We here find ourselves arrested by important considerations. On the one hand, it very often happens that true insanity shows itself at first only by indefinite symptoms and takes its real form and its complete development only at a period more or less remote from its first appearance; on the other hand, the methods of classification applied even to this day in medicine are still very imperfect, and lack much of that degree of precision which seems to belong especially to the other physical sciences. . . . The external and tangible properties of objects are the only ones which receive the attention of the doctor: it is by the examination of these that he regulates his ministry, and intellectual facts are almost always surrounded with so many obscurities that it is extremely difficult to assert rigorously exact analogies or differences.

"If these reflections are true, in general, they are especially so with respect to the facts observed

in Martin's case, and the mere statement of these facts furnishes a sufficient proof of this. We consequently think that Martin's condition may change. It would be rash to pronounce upon this condition before the lapse of a year, and until then we think it is proper that we should abstain from judging him. We also think that this condition, as we have observed it, cannot, taking into consideration the present imperfection of our knowledge, be characterized in a precise manner, and that even if we suppose that it would always remain the same, it would still be necessary to wait, in order to determine its nature, until facts of the same kind, observed and recorded with care, should have been discovered in sufficient quantity to spread new light upon this still obscure portion of our knowledge."

Consequently, Pinel and Royer-Collard declare that they have found it necessary to refrain from giving any treatment, they decide that the minister has done "an act of justice and humanity" in returning Martin to his family, and request that, during a period of considerable duration, he should be the subject of "enlightened observation."

\* \* \* \* \*

When Louis XVIII decided to summon Martin to the Tuileries, he had not yet read this report, which was not drawn up until several days later.

But M. Decazes had communicated to him the observations of the physicians, and the Archbishop of Rheims in like manner the impressions of his emissary, Abbé Dulondel. To what sentiment did he respond in summoning Martin? Probably to simple curiosity. "Infected with his century, it is to be feared that religion was for the 'very Christian king' only an elixir suitable for the amalgamation of the drugs of which royalty is composed." (This admirable formula is by Chateaubriand.)

On April 2, Martin was conducted from Charenton to police headquarters. The minister announced to him that he was about to be taken to see the King, then went into a neighboring room. Then Martin beheld the archangel, and heard these words: "You are going to speak to the King and you will be alone with him; have no fear in appearing before the King because of what you have to say to him." A carriage was ready. But the peasant preferred to go to the Tuilleries on foot, and the first gentleman in waiting introduced him into the King's apartment.

\* \* \* \* \*

Martin was in the presence of Louis XVIII; he was finally going to be able to acquit himself of his mission and to transmit to the King the warnings of the archangel.

He himself reported this interview to Doctor Royer-Collard; then, after returning to Gallardon, he made a more detailed statement to his curate, M. Laperruque; the latter wrote down the relation under the dictation of Martin, who certified to its exactness, and the manuscript was sent to the prefecture of Chartres. We are obliged to confine ourselves to the statements of the laborer of La Beauce, for the scene had no witness. To the Duchess of Berry, who questioned him about this personage, Louis XVIII merely replied that *Martin was a very worthy man who had given him good advice from which he hoped to be able to profit.*

Martin finds the King seated at a table "upon which," he says, "there were many papers and pens." He bows, hat in hand.

"Sire, I salute you."

"Good morning, Martin."

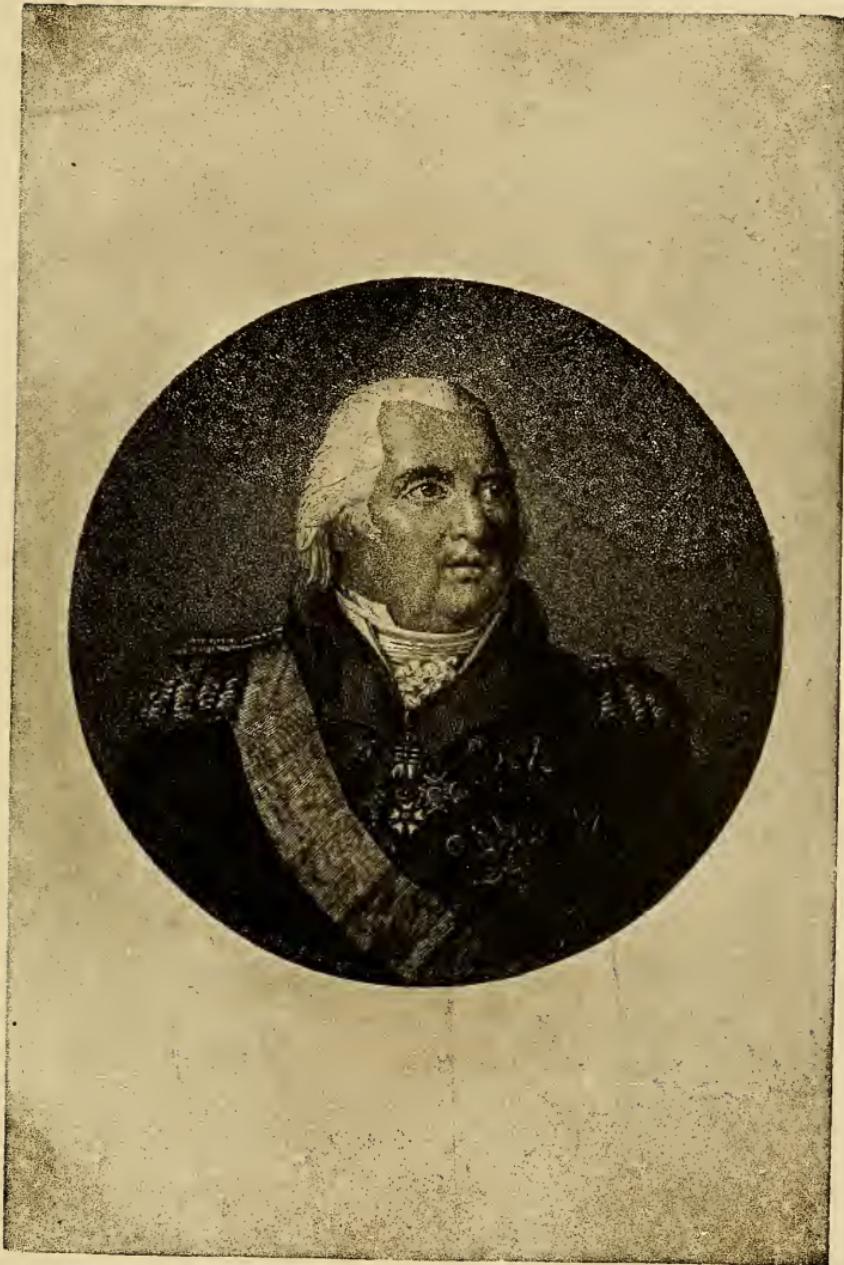
"You surely know, Sire, why I come."

"Yes, I know that you have something to tell me and I have been told that it was something which you could say only to me. Be seated."

Martin takes an armchair, sits down on the other side of the table, facing the King, and begins the conversation.

"How is your health, Sire?"

"I feel a little better than I have for some time; and how are you getting along?"



LOUIS XVIII



"I am very well, thank you."

"What is the reason for your coming here?"

And the seer commences to relate the admonitions and the prophecies of the archangel, all that had happened to him since January 15, the date of the first apparition. He adds:

"It has also been said to me: One has betrayed the King and will betray him again; a man has escaped from prison; the King has been made to believe that this occurred through subtleness, skill and chance; but the thing is not so, it was premeditated; those who should have attempted to recapture him have neglected the matter; they have used in their task much slowness and negligence; they have caused him to be pursued when it was no longer possible to recapture him. I do not know who, they have not told me this."

"I know him well, it is Lavalette."

"It has been said to me that the King examines all his employees, and especially his ministers."

"Have they not named the persons to you?"

"No, it has been said to me that it was easy for the King to know them; as for myself I do not know them."

Martin pretends that, at this moment, Louis XVIII lifted his eyes to heaven, saying: "Ah! it is necessary!". . . and began to weep. Seeing which, he himself wept with the King to the end

of the interview. But his emotion does not prevent him from continuing.

"It has also been said to me that the King should send into his provinces confidential officials to examine the administrations, without their being warned, without their even knowing that any one has been sent; and you will be feared and respected by your subjects. It has been said to me that I should say to you that the King should remember his distress and his adversity in the time of his exile. The King has wept for France; there has been a time when the King no longer had any hope of returning hither, seeing France allied with all its neighbors."

"Yes, there was a time when I no longer had any hope, seeing all the States which no longer had any support."

"God has not wished to destroy the King; he has recalled him into his States at the moment when he least expected it. At last the King has returned to his legitimate possessions. What are the acts of grace which have been returned for such a benefit? To punish France once more, the usurper has been drawn from his exile: it was not by the will of men, nor by the effect of chance that things were permitted thus. He returned without forces, without arms, without any defense being made against him. The legiti-

mate King was obliged to abandon his capital, and although he believed that he could still hold one city in his States, he was obliged to abandon it."

"It is very true, I intended to remain at Lille."

"When the usurper returned. . . [let us omit these historic matters]. The King again reentered his States. Where are the acts of grace which have been rendered to God for so glorious a miracle?"

And Louis XVIII still weeps. . . . Then Martin *recalls to him private facts regarding his exile.*

"Keep the secret of them," returns the King; "*there will only be God, you and myself who will ever know that.* . . . Has it not been said to you how it is necessary that I should conduct myself in governing France?"

"No, he has made no mention to me of all that which is in the writings; the minister has the writings, as the things have been announced."

"Has he not said to you that I have already sent forth decrees for all that you have spoken of to me?"

"No, no one has mentioned it to me. . . ."

". . . If, however, he returns, you will ask him how it is necessary that I should conduct myself in governing."

"It has been said to me that as soon as my commission to the King had been accomplished,

I would never see anything more and that I would be undisturbed."

Louis XVIII, perhaps less troubled than the worthy Martin believes, continues to question the seer and to make him detail the circumstances under which certain of his previsions have been realized. (The medical report informs of these curious coincidences.) Then, having listened to this story — "It is the same angel," he says, "who led the young Tobias to Rágès and who made him marry her." He takes the right hand of Martin, that which the angel has pressed, and adds: "Pray for me."

"Surely, Sire, I and my family, as well as the curate of Gallardon, have always prayed that the affair should succeed."

"How old is the curate of Gallardon? Has he been with you long?"

"He is almost sixty; he is a worthy man; he has been with us about five or six years."

"I commend myself to you, to him and to all your family."

"Surely, Sire, it is much to be desired that you should remain; because if you should happen to depart or if some misfortune should come to you, we others would risk nothing also by going away, because there are also evil people in our country; they are not lacking."

After having renewed all the recommendations which the archangel had charged him to transmit to the King, Martin wishes Louis XVIII good health and asks his permission to return "to the center of his family."

"I have given orders to send you back there."

"It has always been announced to me that no harm and no evil would happen to me."

"Nor will anything happen to you; you will return there tomorrow; the minister is going to give you supper and a bedroom and papers to take you back."

"But I would like it if I could return to Charenton to bid them good-by and to get a shirt which I left there."

"Did it not trouble you to remain at Charenton? Did you get along well there?"

"No trouble at all; and surely if I did not get along well there, I would not ask to go back."

"Well, since you desire to go back there, the minister will see that you are sent there at my expense."

On the next day, having said farewell to the physicians at Charenton, Martin was taken back to Chartres, where the prefect of Eure-et-Loir recommended him to observe the greatest discretion in regard to his adventure, then he returned to Gallardon. The curiosity seekers who had been

worried by his absence questioned him: "When you have business," he replied to them, "do you not go and do it? Well, I have been to do mine." And he went back to working in the fields.

\* \* \* \* \*

M. Decazes and the King himself would doubtless have preferred that the affair should remain secret; but it was soon bruited about. Troubled by the extraordinary events which had occurred in France in the last two years, imaginations were eager for the supernatural. On the other hand, the most violent members of the Royalist party did not find it inopportune that a miraculous voice had come to recall to the sovereign his duties as "very Christian king."

Copies of the medical report and manuscript relations circulated among the public. In the month of August, 1816, an English journal told the story of Martin. It was published in the *Journal général de France* in January, 1817. Finally pamphlets were printed. A "former magistrate" of Dijon told the stories of the *visions* which he considered miraculous; he accused the physicians of having "spread clouds over the truth of the revelations made to Martin," and compared the "divine" mission of the peasant to that of Joan of Arc. A priest, Abbé Wurtz, answered: for him, all the visions of the man of

Gallardon were only fables and illusions; they touched upon "the dignity of the most august family of the universe"; this pretended archangel was an enemy of the legitimate monarchy; upon the high hat of the unknown, there was perhaps a tricolored cockade under the white one!

Finally, there appeared a work which subsequently ran into twenty editions and spread the name of Martin of Gallardon throughout the whole of France: *Relation Concerning the Events Which Happened to a Laborer of La Beauce in the Early Days of 1816.* Its author was M. Silvy, "former magistrate," a man of great knowledge and of great piety; it was he who acquired the site of the ruins of Port-Royal and who perpetuated in the nineteenth century the spirit and the traditions of Jansenism.

Written from the accounts of Martin himself and the reports of the director and the doctors of Charenton, this relation was accompanied by religious considerations. M. Silvy did not doubt that Thomas had been inspired by God through the mediation of an archangel. He interpreted in his own fashion the quite scientific prudence which the doctors had evidenced in refusing to give a definite opinion upon the case of the illuminate. A whole life of disinterestedness and charity proved the good faith of M. Silvy. But it is

sufficient, to eliminate the idea of a fraud, to know the mortifications and the disillusionments which eventually overwhelmed this honest man, without affecting his belief.

The police commenced to be stirred up. The peasant had been sent back to his plow with a recommendation to be silent; he was silent, but many others talked in his stead. It was impossible to act vigorously against him without becoming ridiculous, for the authorities had been forced to recognize his sincerity, and the report signed by the alienists would not allow a personage as inoffensive as he to be returned to Charenton. Measures were therefore taken against his historian, and the police prosecuted M. Silvy. The latter, who was a good Royalist, did not hesitate to declare that when the first edition of his pamphlet was sold out he would bind himself not to publish a second. This, for the moment, was all that M. Decazes could wish. The prosecution was abandoned: the publicity of a trial was useless.

The archangel Raphael had announced to Martin that "when his commission had been carried out he would see nothing more." But, one day, the visions recommenced, to the great astonishment of all those who had believed in the first revelations. They admitted their embarrassment, and

made the conjecture that, after having received his inspirations from a messenger of light, Martin might now be visited by a messenger of darkness. Besides, the archangel did not appear again. Martin merely heard voices which announced to him the fall of the Bourbons and the dismemberment of France; he saw hands tracing mysterious letters upon the walls; he predicted frightful catastrophes. The peasant had become prophet. His mental condition changed, in accordance with the prediction of Doctor Royer-Collard. People came to consult him from twenty leagues around. His poor cracked head put him at the mercy of all the plotters.

He got mixed up in his revelations. We have seen that when he had been admitted to the presence of Louis XVIII, he had told the latter certain secrets of his exile and that the King had begged him to preserve this confidence. He was silent until the death of the King; but in 1825 he believed that he was able to speak and made this strange confidence to Duc Mathieu de Montmorency; one day Louis XVIII, then Count of Provence, had, while hunting, formed the design of killing Louis XVI, had even taken aim at his brother, and only chance had prevented the murder. It was this criminal thought that he, Martin, had recalled to the King. Certain

Royalists observed, not without foundation, that the historical knowledge of Martin was not very sound, and that it was not a question here of secrets of the period of exile.

Martin did not trouble himself about these inconsistencies, and continued to prophesy. In 1830 he announced the Revolution. On the Saturday which preceded the ordinances, he heard a voice pronounce these words: "The ax is raised, blood is going to flow." When Charles X in flight sent the Marquis de la Rochejacquelin to him from Rambouillet to question him as to the decision he must make, Martin replied that all was over and that it was necessary to leave France. On the next day, while listening to the mass, he saw three red tears, three black tears, and three white tears, fall upon the chalice. The puzzle was solved by three words: *Death, Mourning, Joy*. The *Joy* seemed superfluous to the adherents of the legitimate monarchy.

As to the famous "secret of the King," it was not long before he gave a new version of it. What he had revealed to Louis XVIII was the survival of Louis XVII. He had fallen into the hands of the partisans of Naundorff; he remained there until his death.

Shortly after the Revolution of 1830, there appeared an anonymous pamphlet entitled: *The*

*Past and the Future Explained by Extraordinary Events.* The author, who did not give his name, was Abbé Perrault, secretary of the Grand Almonry of France during the Restoration and member of a "Committee of Researches Respecting Louis XVII." He made use of the revelations of Martin to demonstrate the illegitimacy of Louis XVIII and of Charles X, and Martin certified to all of this with his name and his signature. (Note 15.)

His former friends, whom he seemed to deny and whom he allowed to be defamed by the anonymous author of the pamphlet, were greatly grieved by this. I have before me a touching letter which was written him at that time by M. Silvy: "May the Lord deign to give you eyes enlightened by the heart, to lead you back into the way of truth and sincerity. I cannot nor should I conceal from you that in separating yourself from it, as you seem to have done for several years, you do an infinite wrong to the special work with which you were charged by the angel of the Lord in the early months of 1816. You were then only a simple instrument in his hands, chosen by him as a good villager whom no one could suspect of belonging to any party, and unhappily there are many of these which divide the Church and the State. What a change

has happened in you! And what a difference between Thomas Martin as he showed himself in 1816, and the same Thomas Martin in 1832! . . . Such is the evil fruit (the fruit of death) of this book (a lie) *Du passé et de l'avenir*, which confirms and must confirm more than ever different persons in unbelief and in avoidance of the salutary advice which was given to all France by the mission which was confided to you (and which you have just dishonored). I have learned by myself and I am still certain from different testimonies that many of those who at first had believed in your first announcements no'longer give to you the shadow of faith. I could even name to you, if you desire it, curates and honorable priests, vicars and even seminarists whom your new visions and their manifest falsity have totally disgusted with your previous revelations of 1816. . . ." This letter was not answered. The unfortunate Martin belonged henceforward to those who exploited his hallucinations.

When, in the month of May, 1833, the clock-maker of Crossen, Duc de Normandie, arrived at Paris to make himself known to his faithful, and when the sect commenced to be organized, the King and the Prophet met. The circumstances of this interview are not known precisely. According to certain authors, Martin was taken to Saint

Arnoult, a village near Dourdan, to the home of the curate Appert, one of the most zealous and most devoted partisans of Naundorff; there, in the presbytery, they presented him to a mysterious personage whom he immediately hailed as the true King of France, while the friends of Naundorff wept at the spectacle of the miracle. But the Viscount of Maricourt received from the mouth of Doctor Antoine Martin, son of Thomas Martin, a version according to which the scene may have been less solemn and less touching. In September, 1833, on waking one morning, Martin said to his son: "At this moment there resides at Paris, with Madame de Rambaud, an unknown who calls himself King Louis XVII. My angel requires me to assure myself of his identity. Let us depart, my son." They departed. "Are you King Louis XVII?" Martin brusquely said to the stranger who was called Naundorff, when he was in his presence. "In that case, you have upon the shoulder, a *half-ring*, an indelible sign of your identity, marked there by the Queen your mother, a *sleeping lion* upon your breast and a *dove* on your thigh." Then Naundorff took the Martins, father and son, into "a discreet place prescribed by decency," and allowed them to see that these signs were marked upon his body. (Note 16.)

From the day when Martin enrolled himself in

Naundorff's party he leads a wandering life, full of tribulations. He stays but rarely in his own village. He retires sometimes to Chartres, sometimes to Versailles; for the voices order him incessantly to flee from his enemies and to hide himself.

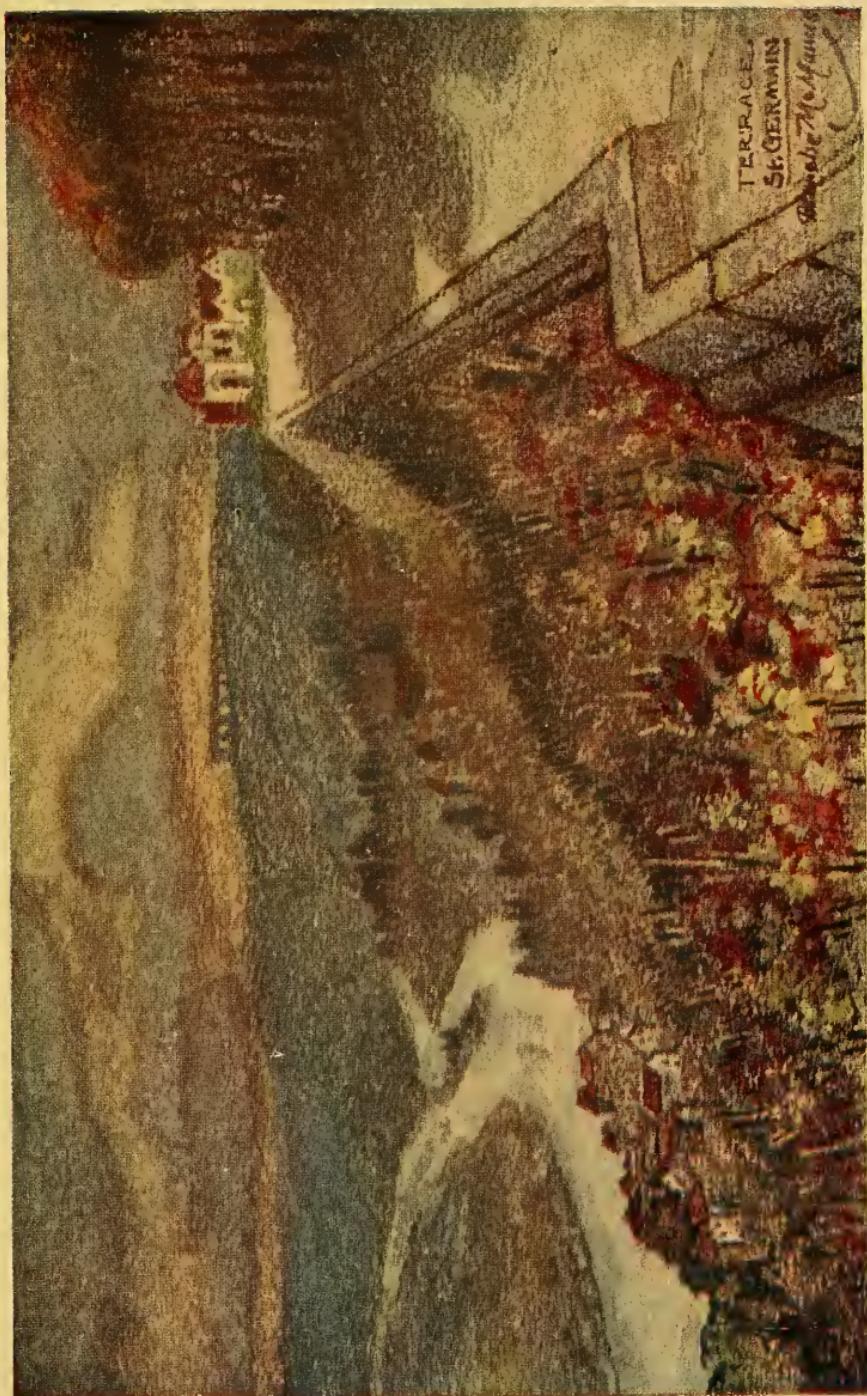
On April 12, 1834, he leaves Gallardon to make a retreat at Chartres. When leaving, he tells his wife that he well knows that something is going to happen to him, but that he confides all to the will of God. He goes to see some *honorable* persons who are accustomed to receive him. But, when his novena is finished and he is about to return home, he is taken with frightful pains and dies before a doctor can be called. The *honorable* persons send for the widow, require her to send the body of the deceased to the home of a curate, her relation, and the latter is requested to declare that the death took place in his house. He refuses, and the body is transported to Gallardon. The strangeness of all these circumstances and the appearance of the body cause suspicion of poisoning. Martin's family demand that the body shall be exhumed and an autopsy made. The doctors examine the body, but nothing more is heard of the affair.

Thus ends very mysteriously the seer Thomas Martin of Gallardon.



*The Valley of the Seine, from the Terrace at  
St. Germain.*

*From a water-color by Blanche McManus.*



TERRACE  
St GERMAIN  
PARIS

Postale M. H. G.



## X

### FROM MANTES TO LA ROCHE-GUYON

WHEN we leave Mantes and follow the valley of the Seine, we leave behind us the charming town so well named Mantes-la-Jolie. At each turn of the road the sleeping waters reflect a heaven of blue, and trembling verdure beneath: we dream of Corot. Through the gaps in the curtain formed by the poplars of the isles and the river banks, appears the white and smiling town, rising above its river, sweetly ordered below the towers of its fine and proud cathedral; we dream of the delicate, precise and finished grace of those landscapes which form the background of fifteenth-century miniatures.

Farther on, the aspect and the color of things change completely. Chalky escarpments close the horizon. Here commences the bluff, the abrupt bluff, which henceforth will overlook the bank of the Seine all the way to the channel, and which uninterruptedly will form the bastion of the Norman coast from Havre to Dieppe. The locality has already a sort of maritime flavor. On

days of tempest, the clouds which flee from the northwest and rush across the great valley seem to be swept by the wind of the open sea, the river is covered with little short, foamy waves, the air has a salty tang; and when Vetheuil, at the entrance of a tiny ravine, presents its low houses, its lanes tumbling toward the river bank, the high terrace and the Norman tower of its church, we might swear it was a fishing village. . . .

This church of Vetheuil, which is said to have been commenced in the twelfth century, boasts of a fine belfry pierced with high lancet windows, which was built by Charles le Bel. It was recommenced and completed in the sixteenth century by the Grappins, architects of Gisors. This family enriched the Vexin with precious buildings. The church of Vetheuil is the masterpiece of the most celebrated artist of the dynasty, Jean Grappin the elder. The Renaissance gave France few religious edifices more seducing and more harmonious than this. Nowhere were the new decoration and the classic styles more ingeniously applied to the transformation of an old church. The façade of Gisors, which is also by Jean Grappin, seems to be less perfect in its art. Here the architectural effect is light and finely balanced. Niches, consoles, dais, balustrades, medallions, are charmingly invented. We still see the elegance and sobriety

of the earliest Renaissance; and yet there already appear, under the little porch, the H and the crescent. The Grappins had remained faithful to the traditions of taste and restraint, which were beginning to be lost by their contemporaries.

Within, there are some pretty statues of earlier days, a fine Flemish altar screen with scenes from the Passion, and abominable colored statues of the most modern hideousness.

We stop before a singular chapel, shut off by a vilely daubed wooden grating: to look at the rags and strange accessories which hang on the walls, we might at first take it for the property room of a theater. The paintings with which it is afflicted represent sepulchral things, thigh bones, tears and death's heads. The wall which faces the altar is covered with the portraits of a large number of persons dressed in black, and covered with a sort of bonnet with turned-up edges. This is the chapel of the *Charity* of Vetheuil, a lay brotherhood, whose function is to assist the dying and bury the dead. It doubtless dates from the Middle Ages, like other brotherhoods of the same type, which were formed in the Vexin, the remembrance of which is not yet totally lost at Mantes, at La Roche-Guyon, at Vetheuil, at Rosny. Like them also, it was restored by a bull of Gregory XIII at the end of the sixteenth century, as a result of the

frightful ravages of the plague at Milan. The *Charities* of Rosny, of La Roche and of Mantes have been dissolved. That of Vetheuil has survived. The costumes of the brothers, great robes of black serge with a blue collar, are what we see hung on the chapel wall; and here are also the lanterns and the crosses which are carried before the bier, the bell of the bell-ringer, and his dalmatica sprinkled with skulls and bones, as well as the insignia of the chief banner bearer. (Note 17.) Each time that I have returned hither I have feared to see this little chapel abandoned and to learn that this touching trumpery had been banished to an attic. Till now the people of Vetheuil have preserved their *Charity*. But how much longer will these vestiges of the rites and the customs of the past endure?

\* \* \* \* \*

Below Vetheuil a torn and ravined promontory presses close to the sudden bend of the river. No trees; a handful of vines; tufts of stunted vegetation dotting the chalky slope. Nature has not been alone in tormenting and tearing this strange wall. Men have carved their habitations in this soft stone; and a subterranean village has been built in the hillside, like those villages which we find in the tufa of the river banks of the Loire. The men have deserted these troglodyte homes,

which are now no longer used save as cellars and stables. But the spot has retained a singular picturesqueness. A little church tower springs from the rock and sometimes we may still see the chimney of a cavern sending its smoke through the vines or the thickets.

The village is called Haute-Isle. Formerly the manor house, surrounded by walls, was the only one which stood in the open. In the seventeenth century it sheltered “the illustrious M. Dongois, chief registrar of parliament.” Now this illustrious M. Dongois was the uncle of the not less illustrious M. Nicolas Despréaux. And it was thus that Haute-Isle (then written Hautile) had the honor of being sung, if I dare say it, by Boileau himself:

It is a tiny village, or rather a hamlet,  
Built upon the slope of a long range of hills,  
Whence the eye may wander far across the neighboring plains.  
The Seine, at the foot of the mountains which are washed by its  
waves,  
Beholds twenty islets rise from the bosom of its waters,  
Which, dividing its flow in diverse manners,  
Form twenty rivers from a single stream.  
All its banks are covered with wildling willows  
And with walnut trees often scourged by the passer-by. . . .

These verses are a little rough, a tiny bit difficult. Lyric quality and picturesqueness were not the business of Boileau. Like all his contemporaries — omitting La Fontaine and Sévigné — he neither knew how to describe a landscape nor to translate its emotion. From this incapacity it has been assumed that the men and the women of

the seventeenth century were indifferent to the charm of nature. . . . They were not pantheists, assuredly; they had neither ecstasies nor tremblings before the "dramas" of light and the "savage beauties" of the ocean or of the peaks. . . . But they understood and felt the grace of a beautiful valley. Since we have met the rural Boileau upon our way, let us collect his souvenirs of country residences.

Let us first remark that if his description of Haute-Isle somewhat resembles a page of pen and ink drawing, we nevertheless find indicated there all of the particulars by which this landscape enchant us: the contrast of the rough, wild slope with the wide plain which stretches beyond the Seine, the grace of the river and its islands, the verdure of the willows and the walnuts. And Boileau does not forget to show us — by a somewhat obscure periphrase — the urchin who, as he passes along the road, brings down the nuts by hurling stones.

What does Boileau do when he is in the country? He makes verses naturally, since his business is to be a poet.

Here, in a valley which answers all my needs,  
I buy at little expense *solid* pleasures:  
Sometimes, with book in hand, wandering in the meadows,  
*I occupy my mind with useful thoughts;*  
Sometimes seeking the *end of a line which I have constructed*  
I find in a nook of the woods the word which had escaped me. . . .



NICOLAS BOILEAU-DESPRÉAUX



Behold the *solid* pleasures of a *constructor* of verses, the friend of *useful* reveries. Reporters have recently questioned our men of letters as to how they "employ their vacations." . . . They have replied in prose by confidences quite like those which Boileau addressed in verse to M. Lamignon, advocate general.

But at Hautile, Boileau sometimes stopped to dream and rhyme; then, he "jestingly allured the too eager fish"; or, he "made war on the inhabitants of the air"; and he tasted, on returning from the chase, the pleasure of an "agreeable and rustic" repast.

So, when he was about to leave the country, he expressed the ordinary wish of every citizen and of every poet obliged to return to Paris:

Oh, fortunate sojourn! Oh, fields beloved of heaven!  
Why, strolling forever through your delicious prairies,  
Can I not fix my wandering course here  
And, known by you alone, forget the world outside?

Charming verses, of which La Fontaine would not have been ashamed.

And he said a sad adieu to this countryside, whose peace seemed to him sweeter and more salutary in proportion as the years made him feel more deeply the value of calm and especially of silence; he was then forty years old:

Already less full of fire, to animate my voice,  
I have need of the silence and the shadow of the woods.  
\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*  
*I need repose, meadows and forests.*

This is another very pretty line, the line of a quadragenarian. . .

\* \* \* \* \*

“By the riverside of Seyne is a marvelous mount upon which formerly was built a castle, over strong and over proud and called La Roche-Guyon. It is still so high and fierce that scarcely may one see to its summit. He who made it and enclosed it, made, at the base of the mount and by cutting the rock, a great cave in the semblance of a house, which might have been made by nature.”  
(Note 18.)

The “over proud” castle is still standing on the summit of the hill, dismantled, breached, ruined, but ever keeping its proud and fierce aspect. As to the house created “by cutting the rock,” it has, so to speak, slowly moved away from the slope from century to century. It was at first a sort of den, hollowed beneath the donjon. Then its galleries stretched out and were extended to the edge of the escarpment; then the entrances to the subterranean castle were closed by façades of stone and armed with towers; a fortress was thus built against the rock, and at the same time its ramparts were thrown forward to the Seine. To the gloomy feudal citadel succeeded a château of the Renaissance, somewhat less terrible, and the castellans of the eighteenth century changed it

in the taste of their time without being able to deprive it of its warlike aspect.

This history of the construction is manifest when we look upon this curious pile of different buildings. Above, the ruin of the donjon; at the foot of the slope and united to it, a grand château whose front façade is framed by two towers of the Middle Ages; and before this semi-feudal abode, charming stables in the style of those of Chantilly. A grandiose aggregation, utterly without harmony, almost barbaric, but in which is reflected with attractive clearness the whole past of France, from the invasion of the Normans to the Revolution.

Beautiful furnishings, lovely paintings, fine carvings, adorn the apartments. The walls of the salon are covered with matchless tapestries, which portray the history of Esther. But it is the portraits which monopolize our attention here. Some are mere copies. The others are attributed — correctly — to Mignard, to de Troy, to Nattier. They evoke the glorious or charming memories of the castellans and the chatelaines, and, thanks to them, the whole past of La Roche-Guyon is born again. I do not know that there is in the whole of France a château so rich in memories and in history.

It belonged to the Guys de la Roche, and the

wife of one of them, the heroic Perrette de la Rivière, there sustained a siege of five months against the English. In the sixteenth century it belonged to the Sillys, and you may be shown the chamber where, on the morrow of the battle of Ivry, King Henri found a good supper, a good lodging and nothing more, for the virtuous Marquise de Guercheville ordered that his coach should be harnessed, so that he went away to the house of one of his lady friends two leagues from there — an admirable adventure on which a novel might be written. Then La Roche passed to the du Plessis-Liancourts: thus its name is mingled with the history of Jansenism; then to the La Rochefoucaulds: the author of the *Maxims* dwelt here; then, after the Revolution, to the Rohans, and in 1829 it returned to the La Rochefoucaulds. These names alone are a pæan of glory.

Among the portraits hung on the walls several represent the Marquise d'Envile at various ages. What pretty, fine features! It was this Marquise who created the château as it still exists today, and transformed the old citadel into a home of luxury. Her father, Alexandre de la Rochefoucauld, exiled by Louis XV to La Roche-Guyon, had taken advantage of the leisure given him by the King's disfavor to commence great works in his domain; he had planted trees upon the naked hillside,



HENRY IV



thrown down the useless embattlements of the fortress and constructed a new pavilion. The Marquise d'Envile succeeded him in 1779 and continued his work. Without thinking of expense, she built, laid out gardens, ordered paintings, tapestries and statues. She was a woman of taste and spirit: she corresponded with Walpole and Voltaire, was intimate with Turgot and Condorcet, declared herself the pupil of the philosophers, and made her salon the rendezvous of the economists. But it was said that she practiced philosophy more than she preached it; she had founded a free school in her village and had engaged nuns to teach in it; in years of bad harvests, she opened charitable workrooms for the poor. She showed herself faithful and open-hearted in her friendships, for she remained the friend of Mlle. de L'Espinasse without ceasing to be the friend of Madame du Deffand. She was one of those aristocrats who worked with candid generosity for the ruin of the aristocracy: the Revolution neither surprised nor frightened her. But, on September 4, 1792, a band of revolutionists at Gisors murdered her son, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, who had sat in the Constituent Assembly among the Constitutionalists. In the following year she was herself denounced, arrested, thrown into prison and owed her liberty, perhaps her life, only to a petition of

the citizens of the commune of La Roche-Guyon. She died in 1797 at the age of eighty.

\* \* \* \* \*

A little way back we met Boileau, dreaming at the foot of the bluff of Haute-Isle. A few steps farther on, at La Roche-Guyon, we meet Hugo and Lamartine; both stopped in this château during the Restoration.

La Roche then belonged to the Duc de Rohan-Chabot.

A short while ago M. Charles Baille published a fat book upon this personage, who was somewhat slender, somewhat droll, and even, I will venture to say, a little ridiculous. But as this biography gave its author an opportunity to study men and manners of the period of the Restoration, and as this study swarms with new and well-told anecdotes, we gladly ignore the insignificance of the hero. Here is a summary of the life of this cardinal-duke:

Auguste de Chabot, born February 29, 1788, followed his father, the Prince of Leon, into exile, and returned to Paris with him in 1800. He was educated in a somewhat haphazard fashion by a refractory Oratorist and later by a former college regent. In 1807, when his grandfather, the Duc de Rohan, died, his father became Duc de Rohan and he himself Prince de Leon. When his father died in 1816 he became Duke de Rohan.

In 1808 he married Mlle. de Sérent, who was seventeen years old. Châteaubriand sometimes said to him: "Come, Chabot, so that I may corrupt you"; but his morals remained irreproachable. He traveled in Italy; he saw Madame Récamier and did not fall in love with her. Queen Caroline distinguished him. "She treated him," said Lamartine, "with a marked favor which promised a royal friendship, if the future cardinal had seen in the most beautiful of women anything else than the delight of the eye." He had pretty features, gave infinite care to his toilet, wrote romantic poems and dabbled in water colors.

In 1809 he became a chamberlain of the Emperor. In 1815 his wife was burned to death, the laces of her gown having taken fire. In 1819 he entered the seminary of Saint Sulpice and was ordained a priest in 1822. Madame de Broglie thus described him, in the following year: "He had a thin pale face, and, at the same time, a coquettish care for his person which seemed to join honest instincts with former worldly memories; in his face there was a mingling of fanaticism and foolishness."

He went to La Roche-Guyon to preach and on this occasion he chose five hundred volumes from the magnificent library collected by the Marquise d'Envilleville, piled them up in the castle courtyard

and burned them: they were rare volumes adorned with precious bindings. Later he went to Rome, where he expected to be made a cardinal. He returned without the purple; but he had converted Madame de Récamier's chambermaid.

In 1828 he was elevated to the archbishopric of Auch and later to that of Besançon. He dissatisfied the seminarists by untimely reforms; he did not take it amiss that ecclesiastics should wear polished laced boots. He shocked the liberals by his bigotry and the clergy by his luxury. He restored his cathedral; but he spoiled the apse, broke out the crossbars of the windows to replace them by frightful stained glass, demolished the altar, which was a beautiful work of art of the eighteenth century, and cast out a beautiful stone pulpit of the fifteenth century from which Saint Francis de Sala had preached.

He was made cardinal in the month of July, 1830. The fall of the Bourbons forced him to flee to Belgium, whence he passed into Switzerland. After the death of Pius VIII, he took part in the conclave which elected Gregory XVI and officiated at the marriage of the Duchess de Berry to Count Lucchesi-Pali. He returned to his diocese in 1832, where he was received by a riot. He nevertheless remained there and died in 1833 of typhoid fever.



CARDINAL-DUC DE ROHAN-CHABOT



The *Patriote*, a newspaper of Besançon, which had opposed him, published the day after his death a courteous article: "We do not doubt that he owed what influence he had to his virtue. He prayed devoutly and the accent of his voice, intoning the chants of the Church, breathed true religion. No one can say what he would have effected among us, if his career had been longer and if he had become reconciled to our Revolution."

. . . You think, without doubt, of Bouvard and Pécuchet taking notes to write the life of the Duc d'Angoulême. So do I.

Now let us return to La Roche-Guyon.

Montalembert, Marchangy, Berryer, Dupanloup, Hugo, Lamartine, were there the guests of the Abbé-Duc de Rohan.

How Hugo made the acquaintance of the Duc de Rohan and visited him at La Roche-Guyon; how, terrified by the princely formality which reigned as well in the chapel of the château as in the dining room, he fled after two days; finally how the Duc de Rohan gave Lamennais to Hugo as a confessor, may be read in Volume II of *Victor Hugo raconté par un témoin de sa vie*. We must not neglect to consult also the severe but exact work of M. Biré.

Lamartine wrote one of his most admirable *Meditations* at La Roche-Guyon:

Here comes to die the world's last echoing sound;  
Sailors whose star has set, ashore! here is the port:  
Here, the soul steeps itself in peace the most profound,  
And this peace is not death.

In the note which he left as a sequel to this poem, Lamartine relates that, in 1819, the Duc de Rohan was introduced to him by Duc Mathieu de Montmorency. "We became close friends without his ever making me feel, and without my ever allowing myself to forget, by that natural tact which is the etiquette of nature, the distance which he indeed wished to bridge, but which nevertheless existed between two names which poesy alone could bring together for an instant." This is exquisite, with an affectation of respect which borders on impertinence.

The *Meditation* is entitled *Holy Week at La Roche-Guyon*. Not a line of this grand lyric piece reveals that it was conceived in this place rather than in any other. Lamartine has thus attempted to justify his title: "The principal ornament of the château," he writes, "was a chapel hollowed in the rock, a true catacomb, affecting, in the cavernous circumvolutions of the mountain, the form of the naves, the choirs, the pillars, the rood-lofts, of a cathedral. He induced me to go to pass Holy Week there with him. He took me there himself. . . . The religious service, *pious voluptuousness* of the Duc de Rohan, was celebrated every day in

this subterranean church, with a pomp, a luxury, and holy enchantments, which intoxicate youthful imaginations. . . .”

The picture is delightful. Unfortunately it entirely emerged from the “youthful imagination” of Lamartine. The subterranean church still exists at La Roche-Guyon, just as in the time of the Duc de Rohan. But the triple chapel, cut in the hill, and sufficiently lighted from outside, has nowise the appearance of a catacomb. There are no “cavernous circumvolutions,” naves, choirs, pillars, rood-lofts. The *cathedral* is composed of three little vaulted rooms. . . .

And I now think of the honest Boileau. He would not have mystified us or himself in this manner! It is true that you and I would give the whole epistle to Lamoignon for this single line:

Sailors whose star has set, ashore! here is the port.

## XI

### NOYON

THE light softens and dims, even in these days of the dog star, and, under this heaven of palest azure, the puissant harmony of verdure and red bricks announces the neighborhood of Flanders. Only the stone towers of the cathedral dominate with their gray mass the ruddy buildings and the leafage of the gardens.

Noyon possessed immense convents which were razed during the Revolution. Scattered remnants still mark the sites of these monasteries; here an apse transformed into a storehouse, there the façade of a chapel. The monks have departed; but the town has retained a monastic aspect; and it is a place where one might make a retreat. In the silence of the melancholy streets, the pavements seem to ring more sonorously, and the passer listens with surprise to the echo of his steps between the silent houses. . . .

Upon the market place, the delicate and florid façade of the old Hôtel de Ville of the Renaissance calls up the images of communal life, peculiar to

the little cities of the north; we look for the belfry tower, we expect to hear the chimes; but the disputatious commune of the Middle Ages is now a wise, sad and pensive little town. In the staircase, sculptures in high relief portray the heavy gayeties of northern climes; but Noyon is now a wise, sad and decent little town.

On the same square stands a curious fountain provided by the liberality of an eighteenth-century prelate. Statues of the cardinal virtues decorate its pedestal from which rises an obelisk, surrounded by emblems and allegories; we see there a Cupid caressing a lamb, quivers, arrows, a hound,—symbols of innocent love and of fidelity. An inscription placed upon the monument recalls to the people of Noyon that among them Chilpéric II was buried, Charlemagne consecrated and Hugh Capet elected king. I do not know whether this inscription is as old as the fountain: it has a certain grandeur in its conciseness; let us praise the towns which thus array themselves in their past glories, and recall the part which they have played in the destinies of France. . . .

With its houses of brick and its gardens surrounded by high walls, its silence and its memories, Noyon would merit the tenderness of its people, even if Noyon did not possess its admirable cathedral. . . .

What a charming picture is made by the apse, with its radiating chapels! Torch holders ornament the flying buttresses, which were restored in the eighteenth century: they drive to despair the pure archæologists and fill with joy men without taste who, insensitive to unity of style, love to hear monuments tell their history, their whole history. To this harmonious apse is joined the treasury, and then a fine structure with wooden panels of the sixteenth century, the library of the canons: its street floor was formerly arcaded and sheltered a market; alas! it has been walled up, . . . Behind, the buildings of the chapter house, hovels, turrets, an arcade thrown across the street, a high crenellated wall, surround the cloister and the flanks of the cathedral; and the picturesque-ness of these disordered lines is delightful.

On the other side of the apse appears a lamentable breach. Here formerly stood the chapel of the bishopry; it was attached to the crossing of the church and thus the little portal of the transept was exquisitely framed. This thirteenth-century chapel was long since abandoned; it had lost its ancient roof; but these ancient walls should have been respected. To *free* the cathedral, they have been leveled to the ground. . . . Not quite, however, for the owner of a cellar excavated beneath this chapel resisted the efforts of the architect:

today the remnants of the little edifice still remain. And they have not even the appearance of a ruin, but the piteous aspect of a demolition. Thus has been destroyed a truly beautiful grouping, and the cathedral, quite contrary to good sense, has been isolated from the ancient bishopry to permit the people of Noyon to walk all around their church. At least, this is the only benefit they have received from it.

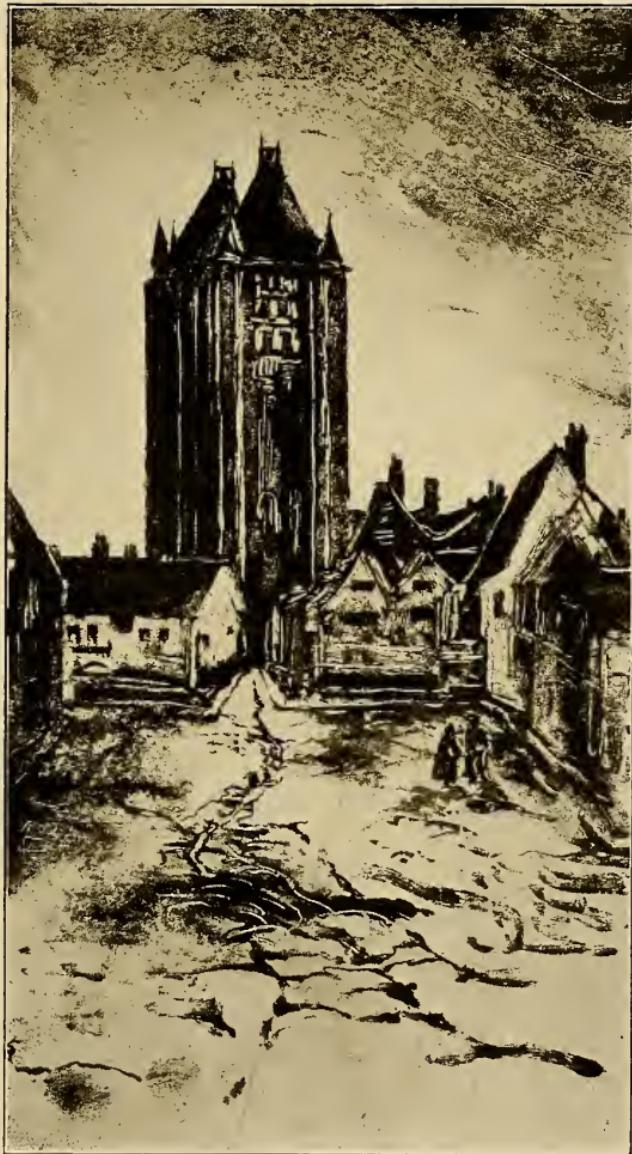
Before the east front of the church lies a little square surrounded by the tranquil and substantial homes of the canons. Upon the piers of each door, great vases swell their paunches and project their stone flames: this is the *leit motiv* of the eighteenth century. The canons for whom these beautiful homes were constructed had only to cross the parvis to enter the cathedral. This rises before their houses with its massive towers, which are not crowned by spires, but in which the mixture of the plain arch with the pointed marks the originality of the building. The vast porch, with three doorways whose sculptures were sacked by the Revolutionists and then by the administrators of the Restoration, preserves an inimitable majesty. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

The exterior of this church charmed us especially by its picturesqueness; within, it gives us an impression of perfect beauty.

It ravishes us at first by the balance of its different parts, by the justness of its proportions. Its plan is a masterpiece. In almost all our cathedrals we admire the choir, then we admire the nave; if we wish to take in the whole edifice at a single glance, we are still astonished by its grandeur and majesty, but our eye no longer experiences the same delight nor our mind the same satisfaction. If we take up a position at the entrance of Notre Dame de Noyon, in that species of vestibule which opens on the first bay of the nave and which here rises to the height of the vaulting, we have before us an absolutely harmonious work. The glance can travel as far as the apse without being arrested by any discordance. There is, I believe, no Gothic church where the dimensions of the nave correspond in so happy a fashion to the dimensions of the choir. The unity of the monument is incomparable. The choir seems to be the completion, the expansion of the long Gothic structure. The nave seems to make its way to this circle of light, without haste, with a tranquil and bold rhythm which is produced by the regular alternation of its naked columns and its pilasters flanked by tiny pillars. . . .

This forms the beauty, so to speak, the intellectual beauty, of the cathedral of Noyon. But its most original character, by which it enchanteth our



From a drawing by Blanche McManus

CATHEDRAL OF NOYON



imagination and impresses itself in our memory, is the marvelous combination of the pointed and the circular arch. (Note 19.) It is charming among all those charming churches which rose in the twelfth century in the valleys of the Oise and the Seine, and in which architects endowed with genius knew how to bring together the round arcs of the declining Romanesque and the pointed arches of the Gothic at its dawning. In no other place did the art of these constructors display itself in so refined and subtle a manner; nowhere else can we find so complete a success; in no other region has the marriage of tradition and moderation given birth to a more exquisite work.

Consider the elevations of the nave: the arches which separate the nave from the side aisles break in ogives; the tribunes are pierced with pointed apertures divided by little columns and surmounted by trefoil windows; the light penetrates this triforium through Romanesque windows; above these tribunes runs a little gallery whose arches are circular, and higher still the twin windows of the clerestory are framed with semi-circular arches. In the transepts, whose two arms end in apses, there are other combinations, but the two varieties of arches are always fraternally associated; the Gothic and the Romanesque alternate from the ground to the vaulting. In the

choir, finally, the arcades, round-arched in the two first bays, are pointed at the back of the apse and the lines of the clerestory reproduce the same arrangement; the tribunes are cut in points and the arches of the gallery are divided in trefoil. To this diversity of lines we must add the diversity of decoration. Two styles are here juxtaposed: here are the monsters, the grotesques and the foliage of Romanesque art, and there the more sober and truthful sculpture of Gothic art.

But — here is the miracle — all these contrasts appear only when we closely analyze the elements of the edifice. They never make discords; they never enfeeble the impression of grace, ease and perfection which we experienced when we entered Notre Dame de Noyon.

\* \* \* \* \*

There has been much discussion about the date of the construction of this church.

This question was not in the least embarrassing to Jacques Le Vasseur, the dean of the chapter, who published in 1633 a volume of 1400 pages, entitled *Annales de l'église cathédrale de Noyon*. For him, the choir where he went every day to sing the psalms had been built by Saint Médard in the sixth century; Charlemagne had constructed the nave; then, after the year 1000, “our choir was refreshed, our nave completed, our belfries added,

for the accomplishment of the work." Nevertheless he added: "At least the experts judge that these works and manufactures are of these times. . . ." The excellent Le Vasseur was not, in any case, the man to contradict them in their judgments, for he consecrated a chapter of his book to demonstrating that the foundation of Noyon by Noah was "probable"; and it is easy to guess the reasons which he extracted from philology.

The "experts" of the nineteenth century looked a little closer. When they had learned to distinguish Romanesque art from Gothic art, they quickly succeeded in classifying the cathedral of Noyon among the monuments of the transition. In a vital and eloquent study which he published in 1845, in which in describing the cathedral of Noyon he studied the origins and celebrated the beauties of Gothic art, Vitet maintained that this cathedral was "conceived and entirely outlined from 1150 to 1170 and that it was entirely carved, finished off and completed only toward the end of the century or perhaps even a little later." These dates are not quite exact: M. Eugène Lefèvre-Pontalis has demonstrated this by the archives and by the archæological examination of the monument itself; he has proved that the choir was finished in 1157, the nave in 1220, that the vaultings fell in a fire at the close of the thirteenth century

and that the church was then repaired. . . . And I refer you to his excellent *Histoire de la cathédrale de Noyon*. (Note 20.)

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The two arms of the transept are rounded in the form of an apse. This plan is frequently met with in Romanesque cathedrals, and especially in those of the lower Rhine. We find it also in the cathedral of Tournai, and it was doubtless from the latter that the architects of Noyon borrowed the idea of their transept, for until the middle of the twelfth century the two dioceses were united under the same pastoral staff. Besides, if I were an archæologist, I would study attentively the plans of these two churches: perhaps this comparison would explain some of the peculiarities of Noyon. Nothing can be more graceful than these two circular arms, where the variety of the arches gives an additional charm to the curved lines. . . . But here behold the malice of the restorers.

The north arm has not been restored. Several of its windows were bricked up in the eighteenth century; the ground-floor windows have been replaced by niches decorated with statues, and at the end of the apse a little door has been opened to communicate with the sacristy. The men who thus treated a venerable monument of the Middle Ages were vandals, I admit. But there is, just the

same, a very pleasing and very delicate reminiscence of the Renaissance in the decoration which they plastered over the twelfth-century walls. They diminished the light in this part of their church; but is not this better than the crude daylight which enters through the clear panes? In short, they altered the character of the ancient edifice, but they left it accent and life.

Turn toward the opposite arm. It also had been modified in the course of centuries, but it has recently been restored to its original condition. A door gave communication with the bishop's garden; it has been suppressed. Several openings had been blocked up, but have been reopened. In short, it has been restored; and it is just for the purpose of better restoring it that they have, as I have described, demolished the little chapel of the bishopry. All this was accomplished with the rarest skill and the most exact science. This apse now presents the aspect of a perfect scheme of architecture. It is light, it is clean, it is finished. But where is the accent? Where is the life? The most vandal of the vandals are not always those we would suspect.

\* \* \* \* \*

Under the crossing of the transept stands the chief altar of white marble. Its table is a vast rounded console, supported by the uplifted hands

of six angels of gilded bronze and surmounted by a little circular temple. The steps of the altar, the friezes and the capitals of the little temple are ornamented with chiseled copper. It is a very beautiful work of art of the style of Louis XVI. It was put in place in 1779.

Until the eighteenth century, the cathedral had retained its old altar of the thirteenth century: placed, according to the ancient custom, at the very end of the apse, without candles, without crucifix, without tabernacle, it was a simple table surrounded by curtains which were opened only at the elevation of the host; the altar cloths varied according to the office of the day; the altar screen was adorned with precious shrines.

Now, in 1753, an architect and inspector of buildings of the King, who resided at Compiègne, Louis Godot, proposed to the chapter of Noyon the designing of an altar "*à la romaine*." His project pleased the chapter, which accepted it, despite the violent opposition of Claude Bonnedame and several other canons, who were displeased with the proposed destruction of the Gothic altar.

Godot, who proposed also to replace the ancient choir stalls, to demolish the rood-loft and to surround the choir with gratings, prepared a sketch. The chapter appropriated the sum necessary for the work. But Bonnedame and his friends were

not through; they addressed a request to the lieutenant-general of the bailiwick, invoking the fathers of the church, the liturgy and respect for ancient things. The intendant of the proprietorship came to Noyon to pacify the chapter. But Bonnedame became more and more intractable. The King remitted the affair to the council of state. The opposing parties again brought forward their liturgical arguments, and added that the sum asked for the decoration of the choir would be better employed if used to reconstruct the vaultings which threatened to collapse. Experts were appointed to examine the condition of the vaultings and declared it to be excellent. Bonnedame did not wish to confess himself vanquished and reasserted his grievances. Godot replied and set up the authority of Michelangelo: it should be quite permissible to place the altar in the transept at Noyon, since it was thus done at Saint Peter's in Rome! The council of state finally ratified the first decision of the chapter and completed the discomfiture of Bonnedame and his partisans.

M. Lefèvre-Pontalis, from whom I borrow this anecdote, cites with honor the names of the canons who, under the leadership of Bonnedame, showed themselves in these circumstances "the defenders of good archæological traditions." Let us therefore praise the canons Du Héron, Cuquigny,

Bertault, du Tombelle, Antoine de Caisnes, Pelletot, Mauroy and Reneufve, who showed a meritorious zeal for the protection of an altar of the thirteenth century. Such sentiments are not common among churchmen, even in 1905; they were still more rare in 1754. Yes — for the love of principle—let us celebrate this pious pigheadedness.

Only . . . only, when I look at the altar "*à la romaine*" conceived by Godot, I ask myself, with all sorts of remorse and scruples, whether Bonnedame or his adversaries were right. This Roman altar is a pure marvel of elegance. The angels of gilded bronze which support the table, and which are attributed to Gouthière, are delightful statuettes; the copper garlands and emblems which decorate the marble are of the finest workmanship; the little temple elevated above the tabernacle is delicate in taste, despite its Trianon-esque appearance . . . And what an unexpected harmony between this charming bibelot and the old cathedral of the twelfth century! Yes, this altar is in its right place, in spite of the liturgy, in spite of the proprieties, in spite of the respectable prejudices of Bonnedame. An exquisite harmony exists between the curve of the steps, the table and the tabernacle, and the rounded forms of the choir and of the transept. What foolishness is this unity of style!

Then Bonnedame was wrong? I do not know, but, today, we must honor his memory and recommend his example; for, if some one today decided to plan to remove the Romanesque altar of the cathedral of Noyon, it would be to substitute for it a Neo-Gothic altar, which would be abominable, encumbering and out of place: on this point there is no doubt.

Godot's altar just escaped being treated by the Revolutionists as the Gothic altar had been by the canons. A mason wished to break down this monument of superstition. But a representative of the people interfered and made this brute understand that what he thought were angels were goddesses of love, that the bunches of grapes and the ears of wheat were not the emblems of the Eucharist, but those of the cult of Ceres and of Bacchus. The altar was spared and became that of the Goddess of Reason. Persons who today still share the opinion of Bonnedame, will perhaps find that the representative of the people did but reëstablish the truth. Let us reprove such a manner of thought. . . .

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Of the cloister of the cathedral, there still remains only a single gallery. The rest, very dilapidated, was torn down by the workmen of the fabric of Notre Dame de Noyon in 1811.

On this gallery opens the great chapter hall, an admirable Gothic nave where the restorers have done their work. In the cloister itself, their zeal was more moderate and more discreet. They repaired the broken roofs, bound with iron the falling columns, respected the breaches and the breaks.

As the great walls on which the destroyed triforium rested still stand, the aspect of the place has not changed, its intimate beauty has not been violated. One may still enjoy there the eternal silence, shadow, freshness and coolness. . . . One hears there only the droning of the flies, while, in the midst of the area, a grand weeping willow shades an old well with rusty iron fittings.

Under the cloister fragments of carving have been laid, and in this pile of stones we discover with melancholy a few admirable fragments. Some beautiful tombstones have been set up along the walls. . . .

The afternoon is torrid. It is pleasant to linger under these arches and deliver oneself to the pleasures of epigraphy. Let us decipher the epitaphs.

Here is that of a Bishop of Noyon, M. Jean François de La Cropte de Bourzac, who died January 23, 1766. Three distichs commemorate the humility of the defunct, his piety, his devotion

to the King. Below these Latin verses, which are elegantly banal, we discover a name which excites our curiosity: Gresset. It was, in fact, the author of *Vert-Vert* whom the canons retained to compose the epitaph of their bishop. It is doubtful whether our Bonnedame, the enemy of Roman altars, would have aided the poet in glorifying the virtues of M. Jean François de La Cropte de Bourzac: for it was in fact under the rule of this bishop that an abandoned architect undertook the new decoration of the choir of the cathedral of Noyon.

Upon a great tombstone is represented the Last Judgment. We see there the Great Judge, the angel who sounds the trumpet and declaims: *Surgite, mortui, venite*, the defunct who rises from his tomb, hangs his shroud on the arm of the cross and says to the Lord: *Domine, jube ad me venire*, other open sepulchers and scattered bones. Below these images we read these lines, which lack neither force nor savor (Note 21):

The body of Gilles Coquevil,  
Were he rich or poor, noble or vile,  
Before being laid to rot here,  
Is without food and drink  
Awaiting the Judgment  
And the decree of the last day  
Where we must all. . .  
Render account of past evils.  
May God give his soul promptly  
Pardon, and so to all trespassers.

In the same church, beside the door of the cloister, a singular face surmounts an interminable

epitaph. It is the face of an old mandarin, uniformly bald and symmetrically wrinkled. We see the man to the middle of his body, his arms folded and his thumbs down. His mien, his pose, the expression of his face, have something indescribably Chinese. On his breast appears a mysterious object, in the shape of an ostrich egg, on which is engraved a column with these words: *Ito fidens*. . . . It is necessary to read the epitaph to find the key to the riddle. This mandarin is Jacques Le Vasseur, canon and historian of the church of Noyon, whose name I have already mentioned in connection with the origins of the cathedral. The epitaph commences with a terrible pun upon the Latin name of Le Vasseur, *Vasserius*. A golden vase, it is there said, *vas aureus*, is hidden in this tomb, but it should not tempt the cupidity of any one, for it contains only virtues. It is this symbolic vase that is carved upon the stone. The column is that which guided the confident canon towards his eternal home: *fidens ito* . . . And we learn also — in a delightful Latin which I translate clumsily, — that “this man of good lived, in every place, niggardly for himself, generous for others; that is why, dying, he left little except mingled rare and precious books, preferable — by the declarations of the wise — to the treasures of the Orient as much as to the magnifi-

cent and tinkling adornments of the North. . . ."

All these puerilities do not lack charm, especially when they keep us in the cool shadow of a cathedral, at the hottest and most blinding hour of the day. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

The day declines. It is the moment when all the beauty of the cathedral is revealed. Now the contrasts of lights and shades become more moving. A soft green clarity fills the choir, and lends to its architecture a more subtle and airy grace; it filters through the high openings of the nave, illuminates the pointed arches of the vaulting, accentuates the ramifications of the arches; the whole structure appears lighter and more triumphal.

We return toward the great open doors, and, after the magnificence of the church, savor the delicate and peaceful intimacy of the town. In the triple bay of the portal is framed the little square of the parvis where, ranged like canons in the choir, the houses of the chapter seem to slumber in the twilight, and . . . at the end of a narrow street, roofs, gables and dark clumps of verdure outline themselves against a rosy sky. . . .

## XII

### SOISSONS

SAINT-JEAN-DES-VIGNES

**S**OISSONS is a white, peaceable and smiling city whose tower and pointed spires rise from the bank of a lazy river, in the midst of a circle of green hills: town and countryside call to mind the little pictures which the illuminators of our old manuscripts painted with loving care. Here is France, pure France: nothing of that Flemish air assumed by the little towns of the valley of the Oise, with their brick houses, such as exquisite Noyon, like a great *béguinage*. Precious monuments relate the whole history of the French monarchy, from the Merovingian crypts of the abbey of Saint Médard to the beautiful hotel built on the eve of the Revolution for the intendants of the provinces. In the midst of the narrow streets and the little gardens, a magnificent cathedral extends the two arms of its great transept; on the north a flat wall and an immense expanse of glass; on the south, that marvelous apse where the pointed and the rounded arch mingle in so delicate a fashion.

One cannot omit a malediction in passing on the architect who, to the dishonor of the interior of this monument, marked off each stone with black joints, checkering it in such an exasperating manner that all the lines of the architecture are lost.

A promenade through the streets of this lovable town is charming. Today, I would like to entertain you with the most celebrated of the monuments of Soissons, the abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes.

Of this monastery, which was one of the most beautiful and richest in France, there remains only the façade of the church, the remains of a cloister of the fourteenth century, traces of a cloister of the Renaissance, a few buildings of the seventeenth century, and a magnificent Gothic hall, the refectory of the convent.

How the abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes was reduced to a state of ruin is an interesting chapter of the history of vandalism, which I will briefly relate to you. Then we will see what steps would be necessary to save the refectory building.

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Founded in the eleventh century, the abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes followed the rule of Saint Augustine. Its monks were Joannist canons. Their duty consisted in celebrating mass within

the monastery and in acting as curates in the forty parishes which belonged to the community in the dioceses of Soissons and of Meaux. Ninety canons remained encloistered; fifty priests served the parishes. Because of their holiness and their knowledge, the Joannists had acquired such renown during the Middle Ages that Cardinal Jean de Dormans confided to the monks of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes the direction of the college of Dormans-Beauvais founded by him at Paris.

The gifts of kings, nobles and citizens gave the canons means wherewith to undertake the construction of a great church. About 1335 they laid the foundations of the nave and the towers. At the end of the fourteenth century the walls of the nave were finished, and the towers had risen to the level of the great rose window. The plunderings of the Abbé Remy d'Orbais, and later the wars of the Armagnacs and the Burgundians, interrupted the work, and it was not until about the end of the fifteenth century that the vaultings and the tiles were put in place. The two towers were not finished until later, the smaller in the last years of the fifteenth century, the greater in 1520. The construction of the church had occupied more than two hundred years. (Note 22.)

In 1567, two years after the death of the last canon regular of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes, the Prot-

estants devastated the abbey: the library and the treasury were plundered, the stained glass and the statues were broken, the carvings were burned and the fountains demolished. The commendatory monks took little pains to repair the damages.

At the beginning of the Revolution, there were no more than thirty monks in the monastery. They were expelled, and the nave of the church was used as a military bakeshop.

There is a widely believed legend that the church was demolished during the Revolution. This is absolutely false. At this time, as the roofs were not well looked after, a bay of the vaulting fell; but, under the Consulate, the monument was still solid and a few repairs would have sufficed to preserve it. It was torn down by a bishop of Soissons, Mgr. Leblanc de Beaulieu.

It is a painful story. I have before me the administrative documents of this abominable destruction, documents which were brought to my attention by M. Max Sainsaulieu, the architect of the historic monuments of Soissons. These documents are instructive.

On August 1, 1804, the churchwardens of the cathedral and parish church of Soissons address themselves to the mayor of the city and disclose to him that their church is in great need of repairs and that these indispensable works will cost

23,786 francs. "The desire," they write, "to lighten as much as possible this charge upon our town, has suggested to us a means which would totally free us from it, at least for several years. This means consists in obtaining from the government the right to dispose of the former church of the abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes, in order to employ the products of its demolition for the conservation and repair of the cathedral. It will not be difficult for you, Monsieur le Maire, to convince the government by a description of the present condition of this church, and by a relation of the accidents which almost happened two years ago and again recently, by the falling of various parts of it, that the total demolition of this structure will produce no real disadvantage to the national treasury and will contribute advantageously to public safety. . . ."

Behind the churchwardens, it is really the bishop who demands the demolition of the church. As a matter of fact, on April 25, 1805, by a decree given at the Stabinigi Palace, the Emperor orders that the prefect of the department of the Aisne, *at the instance of the Bishop of Soissons*, shall put at his disposal the church of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes, "in order that the materials coming from the church may be used in the repair of the cathedral": the inhabitants of Soissons must

merely, in exchange for this concession, consolidate the walls of the other parts of the abbey which have been granted to the Administration of Powder and Saltpeter.

Mgr. Leblanc de Beaulieu receives his decree. Meanwhile the inhabitants of Soissons are alarmed at this project of demolition, protest against the plan of the prelate and take their grievances to the prefect. It is often assumed that before the advent of romanticism no one in France cared for the monuments of the Middle Ages. Now, as early as 1805, the news that the church of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes is about to be destroyed excites the indignation of the people of Soissons. The archaeologists make ready for battle. The prefect writes to the bishop (June 26, 1805): "Monsieur, I am receiving a great number of complaints against the approaching demolition of the church of Saint-Jean: the inhabitants of Soissons appear to be extremely attached to this edifice, which they regard as a precious monument of the arts. I have the honor to forward to you a copy of a historical summary which has been forwarded to me. As it belongs to you, Monsieur, to decide the fate of this church, which is at your disposal, I can only confide in what your good sense and your enlightened love for the arts will suggest to you."

His “enlightened love for the arts” does not in the least inspire the bishop with a desire to save the church; but the complaints of his flock embarrass him, and he explains to the prefect that he himself cannot proceed in a regular manner, that it is unsuitable that a bishop should have “personal connection with the demolition of a church.” And, for four years, matters remain at this stage.

Finally, in 1807, disdaining the protests and triumphing over his own scruples, the bishop awards the glass and the ironwork to a certain Archin. In 1809 he empowers his notary to treat in his name with the contractors for demolition. All that he accords to the inhabitants of Soissons is the preservation of the façade.

The bargain is concluded between “Antoine Isidore Petit de Reimpré, imperial notary, domiciled at Soissons, in the name and endowed with the powers of Mgr. Jean Claude Leblanc-Beaulieu, Bishop of Soissons and Laon, baron of the Empire and member of the Legion of Honor, of the first part; and Léonard Wallot, building contractor, and Pierre-Joseph Delacroix père, carpenter. . . .” By the terms of the agreement, the two towers and the portals must remain intact, and the contractors are even obliged to do certain work of consolidation. But nothing will remain of the nave

and the choir of the church: "All the parts to be demolished shall be demolished down to and including the foundations. The rubbish caused by the demolition shall at first be thrown into the vaults of the church; consequently the ceilings of the aforesaid vaults shall be demolished, the ground shall be perfectly leveled and the surplus of the rubbish shall be transported into the fields." This is not all. The bishop reserves for his own share a hundred and sixty cubic meters of ashlar! The price of the sale was fixed at three thousand francs.

For six hundred dollars, they leveled to the ground a marvelous Gothic edifice, the largest church of the diocese except the cathedral; the choir was composed, as a matter of fact, of two bays, the transept likewise of two bays, and the nave of five; it was sixty meters long and twenty-six high. It is an excellent custom to carve upon the monuments the names of those who have built and repaired them. It would not be ill if upon the ruins of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes an inscription should recall the absurd demolition and the name of its author, Mgr. Leblanc de Beaulieu.

In 1821 the demolition was not yet complete, for Wallot found some difficulty in selling his ashlar. It is said that several houses of Soissons were built with the stone of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes.

The Department of War, which had been granted the buildings of the abbey, continued the work of the ecclesiastical housebreakers. It tore down a small Renaissance cloister. Had it not been for the intervention of the Archæological Society of Soissons, it would have destroyed the two galleries of the great cloister which still stand. Finally, in 1870, the German shells did great damage and set a fire which calcined the lower part of the portal.

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Today, a part of the ruins has been placed in charge of the Administration of Fine Arts. It is possible to visit the towers, the organ platform and the great cloister.

It is a lamentable spectacle, that of this magnificent façade, now isolated like a useless stage setting: through the three bays of the portal we perceive the ground which was carefully leveled, in accordance with the orders of Mgr. Leblanc de Beaulieu; the great rose window is an empty hole against the sky. Nevertheless, how precious this fragment of a church still is! What masterpieces of grace and boldness are these two towers, unlike, but both so perfect, with their galleries, their arcades, their pinnacles, their bell towers and their stone spires. And what admirable carvings! There are, under the elegant canopies



*Façade of the Abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes,  
Soissons.*





attached to each story of the towers, the images — alas! too often mutilated by the Huguenots or by the Revolutionists — of the Apostles and the Evangelists; there is the crucified Christ upon the window bars of the great tower window; there are, above all, on the two sides of the rose window, the touching and expressive statues of Our Lady of Sorrow and of Saint John the Evangelist.

Two of the galleries of the cloister have disappeared. The other two present arcades of a charming design. Ornaments of rare delicacy frame the inner door. Heads of monsters decorate the gargoyle. About the capitals and upon the bases of the corbels are twined allegorical flowers of perfect execution: here the vines which recall the name of the abbey itself, there the ivy and the wormwood to which Saint John the Baptist, patron saint of the monastery, communicated the virtue of counteracting witchcraft; elsewhere the oak, the apple, the strawberry, the wild geranium, all the plants which in the Middle Ages were reputed to cure ills of the throat, for, until the last century, it needed but a pilgrimage to Saint-Jean-des-Vignes to be freed from quinsy. (Note 23.)

And this is all that one is allowed to see of the abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes. Whoever is curi-

ous to become acquainted with the last remnants of the Renaissance cloister (a few arches and four very beautiful stone medallions) and to enter the ancient refectory of the abbey, will run against the veto of military authority.

It is probable that the Adminstration of Fine Arts will without difficulty obtain permission that the public may have access to the courtyard where the little cloister stands. But it will doubtless be more difficult to recapture from the War Department the refectory building, where it has been installed for a century.

This refectory is a vaulted hall, forty meters long and divided into two naves by fine columns. Whoever wishes to obtain an idea of the beauty of this admirable structure may think of the refectory of Royaumont, today much disfigured, or even the refectory of the priory of Saint Martin in the Fields, now the Library of Arts and Trades, and whose character has been altered by useless daubs of paint. These two latter edifices belong to the thirteenth century. The refectory of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes seems to date from the fourteenth. Here may be found, as in all the halls of the same kind, the readers' stall hollowed in the thickness of the wall, and reached by several stone steps.

A food storehouse has been installed in this refectory. To utilize the space, it has been divided

into two stories by a floor which passes below the capitals of the columns. Here are piled boxes of canned goods, biscuits, bags of grain. In conformity with the military regulations, all the walls are covered, for a meter above the floor, with a thick layer of coal tar, so that the capitals, just above the second story floor, have disappeared under this covering. The rest of the walls is simply covered with whitewash. At some unknown time the whitewash was removed from certain spots to uncover two pictures which appear to be contemporary with the building. One is still visible and represents the Resurrection. The other has almost completely disappeared. Formerly wooden shutters protected them from the curiosity of the soldiers employed in the storehouse. They are now exposed to every insult. Perhaps other paintings exist under the whitewash.

Under this great hall is a vaulted subterranean room, whose bays correspond to the bays of the refectory. It is likewise used for army provisions.

This is the condition to which, in 1905, one of the most precious monuments of Gothic architecture which exists in France is abandoned. And the vandals are not satisfied with secularizing the buildings, with tarring the capitals and with dooming the paintings to certain destruction.

By overloading the edifice they endanger its safety.

The War Department is not responsible for all this vandalism. It has been assigned a Gothic hall in which to store its provisions. It has used it as well as it knew how; it has applied to it the rules which are common to all military buildings; it is not the guardian of monuments of the past.

This guardianship belongs to the Bureau of Historic Monuments; its responsibility is to take notice of and to save the refectory of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes.

It is not possible to conceal the difficulties of the attempt. The Minister of War will consent to abandon this edifice only if he is furnished another provision storehouse in Soissons itself. So a new building must be put up. Who will pay for it? The city of Soissons, interested in the preservation of a "precious monument of the arts," as the prefect of 1805 said, doubtless will not refuse to contribute to the expense. But the state must come to its aid.

When, tomorrow, at some public sale, there shall be put up at auction some primitive or more or less certain authenticity, a hundred thousand francs will be spent to hang it in a room of the Louvre, and there will be glorification over the acquisition. Would it not be wiser and safer to

preserve the paintings of the fourteenth century which decorate the refectory of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes, whose authenticity, I believe, no one will ever dare to contest? With the same stroke, a magnificent bit of architecture will be saved. Who knows if we may not even see other mediæval paintings appear from under the whitewash? . . . In short, we shall have saved a precious work of Gothic art for France. And future centuries will draw a parallel between the house-wrecking bishop who destroyed the church of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes and the pious undersecretary of state who protected the refectory of the Joannist canons. (Note 24.)

## XIII

### BETZ

At the bottom of a valley,  
There is a charming château  
Whose adored mistress  
Is its most beautiful ornament;  
The charms of her countenance  
And the virtues of her heart  
Embellish nature  
And spread happiness.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the sound of her voice a limpid stream  
Will take a happier course;  
The most smiling verdure  
Will enchant all eyes;  
A scattered and dusky grove  
Planted by her beautiful hands,  
Will cover with its shade  
Candor and beauty.

**T**HIS song, which was set to the tune, *Que ne suis-je la fougère*, was written by Louis Joseph de Bourbon-Condé. The “adored mistress” was Marie Catherine de Brignole, Princess of Monaco. The “charming château” was that of Betz, celebrated at that period because of the beauty of its gardens laid out in the English fashion.

The château has disappeared; but the design of the park is not effaced; not all of the structures

with which it was adorned by the caprice of the Princess of Monaco have perished. After a long period of neglect, the domain is today in safe hands: the remnants of the gardens of Betz are now safeguarded. Groves, ruins and temples here still evoke a memory of the imagination at once silly, incoherent and delightful, which satisfied men and especially women on the eve of the French Revolution.

\* \* \* \* \*

Marie Christine de Brignole had married at eighteen a roué of forty, the former lover of her mother. The Parliament of Paris had divorced her from this brutal and jealous husband, and she had become the unconcealed mistress of Condé. Their relations were public. The Princess lived at Paris in a hotel in the Rue Saint Dominique, beside the Palais Bourbon. She reigned at Chantilly.

Condé was tender but faithless. He deceived his lady love, was desolated to see her unhappy, accused God of having given her too sensitive a heart and began over again. Still other cares troubled the Princess of Monaco: however great may then have been the toleration of the world and the ease of morals, the children of the Prince could not resign themselves to dissimulate the disdain which they felt for *La Madame*. The Princess

of Bourbon amused herself one day by composing a tableau in which she put on the stage her father-in-law and the Princess; these two, who played the two principal parts, perceived the wicked allusions of the author only when they perceived the embarrassment of the spectators; but a family scene occurred as soon as the curtain dropped. Then the public decided that the favorite was responsible for the quarrel which soon separated the Duke and the Duchess of Bourbon. . . . (Note 25.)

*La Madame* had the wisdom to perceive that the moment had come to make a strategic retreat, and to seek a shelter against hostilities which, in the end, might have become perilous. It was necessary for her to find a property which was at the right distance from Chantilly and from Paris, "neither too far nor too near," where she might be forgotten by the world, but where Condé could come to see her without difficulty. She chose Betz, near Crépy-en-Valois.

The lords of Levignen had early built a stronghold above the valley of Betz. Later another home had been constructed on an island formed by the Grivette, a tributary of the Ourcq. It was in this château, already rebuilt in the seventeenth century, that Madame de Monaco established herself. A donjon, the two great

round towers which flanked the wings of the principal block, the waters which bathed the feet of the walls, gave the house an almost feudal aspect. But the interior was decorated in the taste of the day, wainscoted with delicate panels, oramented with charming furniture, paintings and precious objects of art. The buildings and the adornment of the park cost more than four millions.

The Princess of Monaco passed at Betz the happiest years of her life. She guided the labors of her architects, her sculptors and her gardeners. She played at farming. Her sons, from whom her husband had formerly separated her, came to make long visits with her. Condé, wiser with age, redoubled his tenderness. When he was obliged to travel, either to Dijon to preside over the States or to the camp of Saint Omer to direct the maneuvers of the royal army, he wrote to her at length, and the refrain of his letters was: "Would that I were at Betz!" As soon as his service at court or with the army permitted it, he hastened to the Princess: he brought rare books and pictures to enrich the château; he interested himself in the works undertaken for his friend. He advised the workmen and gave his opinion upon the plans. . . .

Madame de Monaco renewed her youth in this

“rural retreat,” and the years passed without lessening the grace of her countenance, without thickening her slender waist, without slowing her light step. It is not an inhabitant of Betz who drew for us this portrait, it is Goethe, at Mayence, in 1792: “. . . The Princess of Monaco, declared favorite of the Prince of Condé, and the ornament of Chantilly in its palmy days, appeared lively and charming. One could imagine nothing more gracious than this slender blondine, young, gay, and frivolous; not a man could have resisted her sallies. I observed her with entire freedom of mind and I was much surprised to meet the lively and joyous Philine, whom I had not expected to find there. . . .” Philine was then fifty-three years old.

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The great occupation of the Princess at Betz was to create a park in modern taste. She found in this her cares and her glory. The Duc d’Harcourt, former preceptor of the first son of Louis XVI, who had already distinguished himself by designing his park at La Colline near Caen, undertook to design the avenues, to form the vistas, to plan the buildings: in a certain sense he drew up the scenario of the garden. Hubert Robert made the plans of the temples and the ruins. The architect Le Gendre supervised the





PRINCESS OF MONACO

buildings. The site was adapted for the establishment of an English garden: on the two banks of the Grivette rose little wooded hills, and, thanks to the undulations of the landscape, sometimes gentle, sometimes brusque, it was there possible to mingle the "picturesque," the "poetic" and the "romantic." The thickets were pierced by sinuous paths; pines and perfumed exotics varied the verdure of the hornbeams and the beeches; the course of the river, which spread out into a marshy meadow, was confined within sodded banks. The forest was thinned to allow the eye to perceive the surrounding fields, and there were scattered in the valley and through the woods

Temples and tombs and rocks and caverns,  
The lesson of history and that of romance.

Models were not lacking. Without speaking of the parks created in England by Kent and his disciples, there existed the admirable examples of Ermenonville, belonging to M. de Girardin, Limours, to the Countess de Brionne, Bel-Œil, to the Prince de Ligne, Maupertuis, to M. de Montesquiou, the Little Trianon and Bagatelle, Le Moulin-Joli of the engraver Watelet. . . . And at the same moment when Madame de Monaco was undertaking the construction of her garden, the financier Jean Joseph de La Bordé was completing, upon the advice of Robert and

de Vernet, the construction of the admirable park of Méréville. The chatelaine of Betz conformed to the rules of the type.

Possibly some day some one will write the history of these English gardens of the eighteenth century: no study would be more suitable to acquaint us with the contradictory sentiments and the confused thoughts which agitated society in the years which preceded 1789. The lectures of M. Jules Lemaître and the penetrating book of M. Lasserre upon Romanticism have recently drawn attention to the disorders caused in the French body politic by the poison of Rousseau. To illustrate such remarks, nothing would be better than the plans and the structures of the parks composed in France from 1770 to 1789. We would there behold a mingling of pedantry and sentimentality, the most refined taste united to the most silly feeling, adorable reminiscences of classical antiquity mingled with the first abortions of romantic bric-a-brac. We would especially distinguish there the laborious artifices and the childish conventions in which the pretended lovers of nature became entangled. And I do not insist upon the prodigious disaccord between ideas and manners: for this I will send you to the charming discourse which the Count de Larborde puts at the beginning of his *Descrip-*



STATUE OF LE NÔTRE, AT CHANTILLY



*tion des nouveaux jardins* (1808), where he shows the foolish and joyous guests of the fashionable parks, laughing in "the valley of tombs," quarreling upon "the bench of friendship" and bringing to the country the tastes and the habits of the city: "while praising the pure air of the fields, they rose at two o'clock in the afternoon, they gambled until four o'clock in the morning, and while they grew tender over the simplicity of country manners, the women plastered themselves with rouge and beauty spots, and wore panniers. . . ."

To tell the truth, the men of this period retained too much delicacy of mind not to feel the ridiculousness of the inventions in which they found their delight. But fashion was master. The theorists of "modern gardens" endeavored to make headway against the excesses of the irregular type. In his agreeable poem, *Les Jardins*, which contains so many ingenious lines, the worthy Abbé Delille lavished the most judicious counsels on his contemporaries and endeavored to hold the balance equal between Kent and Le Nôtre.

In his *Essai sur les jardins*, the modest Watelet, the creator of Le Moulin-Joli, recalled to good taste the constructors of park buildings, and pronounced it ill that one should build a mausoleum to the memory of a favorite hound (an allusion to a grotto in the gardens of Stowe

which Lord Granville Temple had consecrated to the memory of Signor Fido, an Italian greyhound); unluckily, he judged that a perfect, simple and “natural” structure for a park would be the true monastery of Héloïse, and he imagined the inscription which it would have been necessary to carve “upon a myrtle”—*if the climate permitted it*—in order to move young lady visitors. . . . Morel, the landscape architect of Ermenonville, did not like fictitious constructions which assemble in a single locality all centuries and all nations. But, on the other hand, Carmontelle, the designer of the fantastic constructions of Mousseaux, found that Morel’s conceptions were deplorable: and neither of them was wrong. Horace Walpole, in his *Essay on Gardens*, praised the English gardens, but made fun of the abuse of buildings, of which hermitages seemed to him particularly inappropriate: “It is ridiculous,” said he, “to go to a corner of a garden to be melancholy,” and he deplored that the hypothesis of irregularity should have brought people to a love for the crooked. Baron de Tschoudy, author of the article *Bosquet*, in the supplement to the *Encyclopédie*, wrote in regard to tombs, inevitable accessories of all English gardens: “A somber object may not be displeasing in a landscape by Salvator; it is too far from the

truth to sadden us; but what is its excuse? Do we go walking to be melancholy? Indeed, I would like much better to raise the tendrils of the ivy from the base of an overturned column, to read a touching inscription! How my heart would expand at the sight of a humble cabin, filled by happy people of my own kind, who would gayly spade their little enclosure and whose flocks would gambol about it! With what ecstasy would I listen to their songs in the silence of a beautiful evening! For is there anything more sweet than songs caused by happiness which one has given?"

But all this did not discourage the proprietors of English parks from building hermitages, tombs, Gothic chapels, Tartar kiosks and Chinese bridges. . . . In rambling through the gardens of Betz we will meet these structures and many others.

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The design of the alleys at Betz has remained almost the same as it was in the eighteenth century. But, as the park has in the meantime belonged to owners who were little interested in preserving its former appearance, some of the woods have been cut, and places which were formerly bare are today grown up to copses. Rows of poplars which were assuredly not foreseen by the land-

scape gardeners of the Princess of Monaco grow on the banks of the Grivette. Many views have thus been modified and many vistas no longer exist. In addition, some of the old buildings have been destroyed, while only remnants remain of others. Fortunately, to guide us in our ramble and permit us to reconstruct the places as they were in the time of the Princess of Monaco, we possess a very complete description of the gardens. It was drawn up in verse by Cérutti and published January 1, 1792, under this title: *Les jardins de Betz, poème accompagné de notes instructives sur les travaux champêtres, sur les arts, les lois, les révolutions, la noblesse, le clergé, etc. . . ; fait en 1785 par M. Cérutti et publié en 1792 par M. . . , éditeur du "Bréviaire philosophique du feu roi de Prusse."* This work, although in verse, and deplorable verse, contains a sufficiently exact list of the buildings of Betz, and the copious commentary in prose which accompanies the “poem” is sufficiently amusing. . . . But it will perhaps not be useless, before accepting Cérutti as a guide, to briefly recall his life and his writings.

There exists a peremptory and delightful letter of the Marquise de Créqui about him: “The administrator Cérutti has just finished his rhetoric: he promised well, twenty years ago. He has not made a step forward during this time,

We see, as a matter of fact, beginnings which will become only miscarriages. In short, his verses have appeared prosaic to me and his prose profusely ornamented poverty. Do not be astonished at his ecstasy in regard to the century: he owes all to it." Here is the very man: the medal is sharply coined.

Born in Piedmont, Cérutti had entered the Company of Jesus. He taught at first with success in a college at Lyons. In other times, he would have remained the good college regent which he was at the beginning of his life and, as he possessed a certain brilliancy, he would have composed Latin verses in the manner of Father Rapin. Perhaps he would even have succeeded in the pulpit, for he had a fine bearing, an amiable countenance, a pleasing voice, measured gestures and brilliancy of mind. But he was gifted at the same time with exalted sensibility, and the century in which he lived seemed to promise everything to sensible men capable of exhaling all their sensibility in prose and verse. Cérutti declaimed and rhymed during the whole of his life.

While he was still professor at Lyons he had sent an essay on the duel to the Feast of Flora and another essay to the Academy of Dijon on this subject: "Why have modern republics

acquired less splendor than the ancient republics?" Some people ascribed the dissertation of the Jesuit to Rousseau: it was the dawn of his glory. Then, to defend his company, Cérutti composed an *Apologie de l'Institut des Jésuites*. This work brought him the favor of the Dauphin: he came to court. The poor man became smitten with a beautiful lady who was cruel to him and he fell into the deepest melancholy. He emerged from it only to compose verses on charlatanism or chess, and to give his opinion on public affairs in short pamphlets. He was very friendly to new ideas: but, at need, he put his muse to the service of his noble protectresses. One of his works acquired a certain reputation: it was an interminable apologue, *The Eagle and the Owl*, "a fable written for a young prince whom one dared to blame for his love for science and letters." Grimm, though he was very indulgent to Cérutti, made a remark in regard to this fable which is not lacking in subtlety or truth: "There is no sovereign philosopher, there is no celebrated man of letters, who has not received a tribute of distinguished homage from M. Cérutti. Let us congratulate philosophy on seeing the apologist of the Jesuits become today the panegyrist of the wise men of the century, praise the progress of illumination and counsel the kings to take as confessors only

their conscience, good works, or some philosophic poet. *All this is perhaps not so far from a Jesuit as one might imagine. . . .*" When the Revolution broke out, despite his poor health and the deafness with which he was afflicted, Cérutti, who, in accordance with the strong expression of the Marquise de Créqui, owed everything to the century, wished to pay his debt to it. He multiplied his pamphlets and booklets, collaborated in the discourses of Mirabeau, and it was he who pronounced the funeral oration of the orator in the church of Saint Eustache. He was elected a member of the Legislative Assembly, edited a little newspaper, *La Feuille villageoise*, whose purpose was to spread the spirit of the Revolution in the country districts, and died in 1792. If he had lived a few months longer, the guillotine would doubtless have interrupted the ingenuous dream of this unfrocked Jesuit, maker of alexandrines.

What led Cérutti to describe the gardens of Betz? I despaired of discovering what circumstances might have placed him in the household of the Princess of Monaco, until I noticed, scattered through his poem, some verses which had been engraved in the Temple of Friendship at Betz. So Cérutti had been charged with composing the mottoes and the inscriptions

indispensable to every English garden. Such a task was well suited to his poetic talent: it seemed to agree less well with his philosophical convictions. But the philosopher required the poet, in accomplishing his task, to tell the truth to the clergy as well as to the nobility. Thus Cérutti's conscience was appeased. Madame de Monaco, doubtless, was less satisfied. This perhaps explains why the poem was not published until 1792; the nation had then confiscated the château and the beautiful gardens, and the princess was living a life of exile at Mayence, where, for her glory, a better poet than Cérutti sketched her charming portrait in five lines.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let us follow the sinuous ways which lead across the park to the different "scenes" invented for the amusement of the Princess of Monaco. The author of the poem, *Les jardins de Betz*, Cérutti, will revive for us the buildings which are gone. He is a prosy guide, somewhat of a ninny. But his heavy diatribes on priests, nobles and kings make the description of these childish fancies almost tragic. Behind the canvas so pleasingly covered by Hubert Robert, we might almost believe we could hear the heavy tramp of the stage hands preparing for the change of scene.

The château which was inhabited by the

Princess of Monaco stood on an island in the Grivette, quite near the village of Betz. Its towers were reflected in the river, on which floated white swans. Baskets of flowers ornamented the banks. Farther up, the Grivette formed another isle, embellished with exotic shrubs and an oriental kiosk. A Chinese bridge joined it to the park, and little junks were moored to the margin. Pekin gave this kiosk and Nankin these light boats.

Nothing more remains of the château, which was sold during the Revolution and was totally demolished in 1817. There also remains nothing more of these Chinese fancies, by which the landscape artists of the eighteenth century endeavored to recall the true origin of irregular gardens. The rotted planks of the Chinese bridge fell into the little river long ago.

In vain also would we seek some trace of the "Druid Temple." To erect this curious construction, this "little bosky oratory," there had been chosen for cutting young oaks of equal thickness and perfectly straight; they had been cut off at the same height and planted in a circle on an isolated mound; then this circular palisade was crowned by a wooden cupola, whence were suspended pine cones and tufts of sacred mistletoe. On beholding this spectacle Cérutti burst forth:

Who would believe it? This place so pure and peaceful  
Was the cruel nest of superstition!

There formerly, frightening the shadows every evening,  
The Druid, surrounded by a hundred funereal torches,  
Strangled a mortal at the foot of Theutatès.

It is probable that the vision of human sacrifices  
obsessed neither the Princess of Monaco nor her  
friends, when they came to rest themselves in  
this sort of belvedere. But Cérutti is a philosopher;  
and from the Druids his indignation spreads to  
all theocracies—Hebrew, Scandinavian, Roman.  
The priests of Theutatès force him to think of  
the fagot fires of the Inquisition, of the crimes of  
monasticism and of the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. . . . So much so that he can no longer  
restrain himself and passes to other structures:

Cursing the incense bearer, I leave the fatal hill.

Not far from the Druid Temple rose the ruin  
of a “Feudal Tower.” It still stands. Time has  
somewhat enlarged the breaches provided by  
Hubert Robert when he drew the plan. But the  
ivy has grown for more than a century and it  
has given an almost venerable aspect to this fac-  
titious ruin. Everything here is imagined to show  
the ravage of centuries: the battlements have  
crumbled; the interior is empty, and we still see  
the traces of the floors which separated the va-  
rious stories; the stone fireplaces still remain  
attached to the walls. Over the lintel of a door,  
we may read in Gothic characters an inscription

in the purest "old French" of the eighteenth century. Below the tower there are dungeons. We love to imagine the blonde princess for whom this romantic ruin had been erected, coming to sit at the foot of her tower, and, in order to put her thoughts in harmony with the melancholy of this legendary site, reading, in a nice little book published by Sieur Cazin, bookseller of Rheims, some chivalrous romance by M. de Mayer, for example *Geneviève de Cornouailles et le Damoisel sans nom*. Even for us, this imitation is not without charm; its picturesqueness is agreeable; then we surprise here the first awaking of the romantic imagination, the birth of the modern taste for the Middle Ages, and we regret a little the time when people amused themselves by fabricating entirely new ruins, without thinking of restoring and completing the true ruins, those which are the work of time. . . . As to Cérutti, the spectacle of this false donjon cannot distract him from his folly:

Oh, castles of the oppressors! Oh, insulting palaces!  
Walls of tyranny, asylum of rapine,  
May you henceforth exist *only in ruins!*  
Instead of those barons who vexed the universe,  
We see on the remains of your deserted donjons  
Cruel wolves wander, together with hungry foxes:  
Under different names, they are of the same race.

And he immediately adds a note of which I reproduce only these few lines: "I am very far

from confounding modern castles with ancient ones, and the castellans of today with those of former times. The modern châteaux are not soiled with the blood of their vassals, but how many are still bathed in their tears! . . . The castellans of today are, however, distinguished for the most part by a reputation for humanity, philosophy, politeness. But let us plumb these shining exteriors. In these so human mortals, you will find . . . tyrants inflexible to their inferiors. Their philosophy is still less solid than their humanity. . . . As to this politeness so vaunted by them, it is in the final analysis nothing but the art of graduating and seasoning scorn, so that one does not perceive it and even enjoys it. . . . They seem to except you, to distinguish you from the common herd; but try to emerge from it, and they will thrust you back." The whole bit would be worth quoting. It is beautiful, this outpouring of venom on account of a garden pavilion!

In the midst of a thicket, in a place which was formerly open, a little pyramid stands on a high base. The inscription which it formerly bore in golden letters:

L'INDEPENDANCE AMERICAINE

has disappeared. Reflections of Cérutti upon "the impetuous car of revolutions": events have

combined to give them a certain opportuneness here.

The mingling of centuries and the diversity of allusions were one of the laws of the composition of an English garden. This is why, a little farther on, we penetrate to the “Valley of Tombs.” A Latin inscription invites visitors to meditation and silence. An avenue of cypress, of larches, of pines, of junipers, “of all the family of melancholy trees,” led to the tombs and disposed the soul to meditation. Sepulchers “without worldly pomp and without curious artistry,” bore naïve epitaphs. Here were the tombs of Thybaud de Betz, dead on a Crusade, and of Adèle de Crépy, who, having followed her knight to the Holy Land, brought back his mortal remains and “fell dead of grief, at the last stroke of the chisel which finished ornamenting this monument.” The epitaphs were engraved in *Gothic characters*; for “this Gothic form is something more romantic than the Greek and the Roman.” It is needless to remark that these tombs were simple monuments intended for the ornamentation of the garden and that no lord of Betz was ever buried in this place. Some of the “melancholy trees” planted by the Princess of Monaco still remain among the thickets which have since grown in the “Valley of Tombs,” which valley was an

“elevated esplanade”: a pleasing incongruity of the friends of nature! As to the tombs, there remain only a few mutilated remnants of the statues of the two recumbent figures.

\* \* \* \* \*

After the inevitable tombs, come the inevitable chapel and the inevitable hermitage. But the hermitage of Betz possessed this much originality, that it was inhabited by an actual hermit.

The hermitage (today there remains of it no more than the lower part) was composed of two little rooms, one above the other. The upper one was a sort of a grotto used as an oratory.

This monastic cave is a charming spot.  
There we see shining in a little space,  
Transparent nacre and vermillion coral.  
A ray of sun which penetrates the grot  
Illumines it and seems a ray of grace.

Cérutti immediately delivers to us the “secrets” of this illumination. The walls of the grotto were pierced by little crevices, closed by bits of white, yellow, purple, violet, orange, green, blue and red glass. When the sun passed through these glittering bits, its rays, tinged with all the colors, produced a magical light within the grotto. “One would believe that the hermit is an enchanter who brings down the sun, or an astronomer who decomposes light.” Cérutti adds judiciously:

"This curious phenomenon is, however, only child's play."

Any other than Cérutti would perhaps have a word of pity for the poor man condemned to live in a home thus curiously lighted. But he does not love the "pale cenobites"; he approaches them only to scandalize them by his frank speech. . . .

At the foot of the crucifix, the hermit in his corner  
Celebrates his good fortune. . . in which I do not believe.

The hermit believed in it. He even believed in it so well that he lived in his hermitage through the whole time of the Revolution and died there in 1811, aged seventy-nine years,—having observed to the day of his death the rules set for him by the Princess of Monaco. In accordance with these rules, he was required to lead an edifying life, to appear at mass in the habit of his estate, to preserve seclusion and silence, to have no connection with the inhabitants of the neighboring villages, to cultivate flowers and give his surroundings a pleasant appearance, finally to exhibit the hermitage, the grotto and the chapel to curious visitors and to watch that no one touched anything. He received a hundred francs a year, the use of a little field and a little vegetable garden, every Saturday a pound of tallow candles, and in winter the right to collect dead branches

to warm himself. He was furnished in addition the necessary tools for kitchen and culture, two small fire pumps, a little furniture, a house for his chickens and the habit of a hermit. The tailor of Betz — his bill has been discovered — asked ninety-nine francs, five sous for dressing a hermit. Finally two cash boxes were placed, one in the chapel and the other in the hermitage, to receive the offerings of generous souls who wished to better the condition of the recluse.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

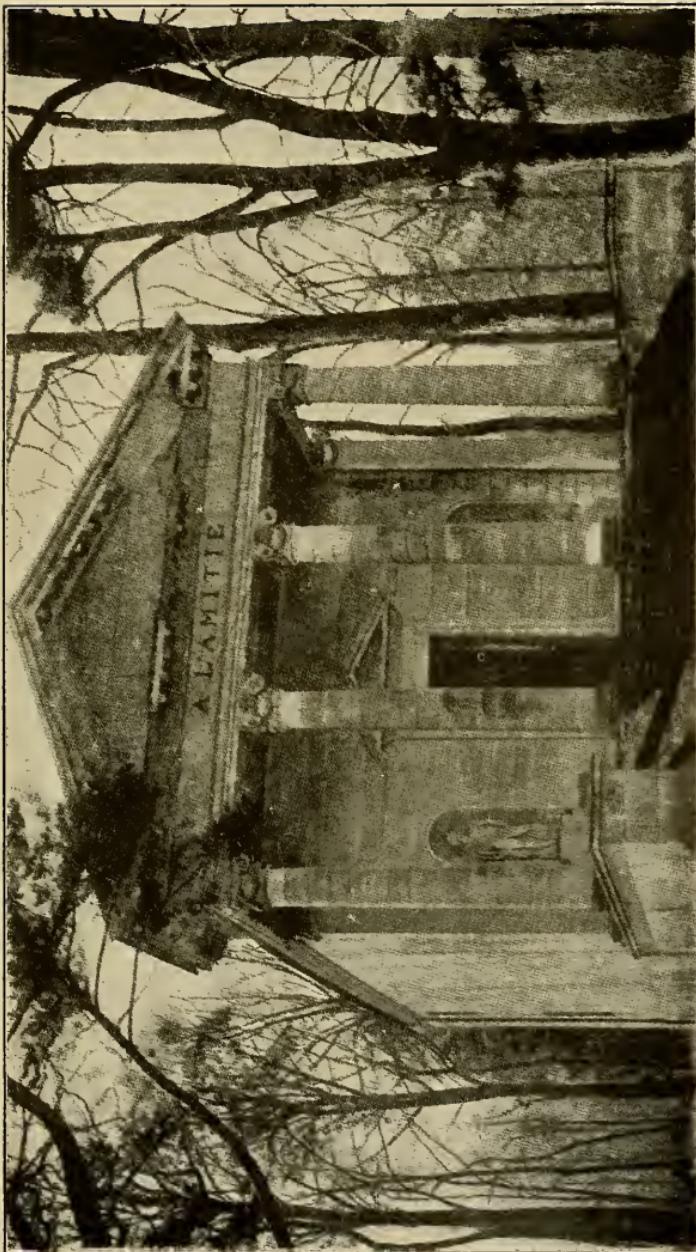
By passing from ruins to tombs and from tombs to hermitages, we have reached the end of the park. Let us retrace our steps along the banks of the Grivette. Under the trees which shade its banks, the little river forms a little cascade, and the picture composed by the landscape architect has here lost nothing of its pristine grace. Cérutti thus describes it:

A vast mass of rocks arrests it in its course  
But, soon surmounting this *frightful* mass,  
*The flood precipitates itself in a burning cascade.*  
Then, resuming its march and its *pompous detours*,  
Etc. . . .

Poor little Grivette!

Upon the right bank of the stream stands a ravishing edifice. It is the *Temple of Friendship*, the most beautiful and, fortunately, the best preserved of the structures of Betz, which alone,

THE TEMPLE OF FRIENDSHIP, BETZ





the château having been destroyed and the park disfigured, is sufficient to immortalize here the memory of Madame de Monaco. Among the great trees which make an admirable frame for it, it presents the four columns and the triangular gable of its Neo-Greek façade. It is the most charming and the most elegant of the Hubert Roberts — a marvelous setting for an opera by Gluck. As we ascend the grassy slope, we savor more vividly the exquisite proportions of the architecture, the sovereign grace of the colonnade, the nobility of the gable, and also the strange beauty of the pines which enframe the masterpiece. (These trees with red trunks and twisted shapes made an important part of the decoration of all English gardens. Introduced into Europe for the first time in the gardens of Lord Weymouth, in Kent, they are called by the landscapists of the times Weymouth pines, or more briefly, Lord pines.)

Formerly, a wood of oaks extended on both sides of the temple; it was cut in the nineteenth century; the hillside is now partly denuded; this is very unfortunate, for the picture conceived by Hubert Robert has thus been altered. Nevertheless, the essential feature of the landscape is intact, for the Weymouth pines still shelter the access to the peristyle.

Under the colonnade, between two statues, opens a door of two leaves on which are sculptured fine garlands of flowers. Within the temple, along the naked wall, Ionic columns alternate with truncated shafts which once supported the busts of the heroes of friendship, and nothing is more original than the oblique flutings of these pedestals. Coffers of singular beauty decorate the ceiling, in the midst of which an opening allows light to enter. About the edifice runs a cornice, the design of which is at once rich and delicate. A charming marble bas-relief decorates the top of the doorway. The rear wall curves back between two columns to form a little apse, raised by two steps: its curve is so pleasing, its dimensions are so just, the arch of the demi-cupola which shelters it is designed with so much grace, that we experience, in contemplating these pure, supple and harmonious lines, that ravishment of eye and soul which only the spectacle of perfect architecture can produce. Before the steps is placed a round stone altar. In the little apse, we might have admired until recently a plaster reproduction of *Love and Friendship*, the celebrated group which Pigalle carved for Madame de Pompadour, the marble of which — much damaged — belongs to the Louvre. M. Rocheblave, who saw the statue in the place where the Princess of Monaco had

placed it, and who has written very interestingly about it (Note 26), affirms, and we can believe it, that this cast of the original, made and lightly retouched by the sculptor Dejoux, was a unique work, infinitely precious. It has been removed from Betz; but it will soon be replaced by another cast of the same group. The divinity will recomplete its temple.

On the pedestal of the statue appeared this quatrain:

Wise friendship! love seeks your presence;  
Smitten with your sweetness, smitten with your constancy,  
It comes to implore you to embellish its bonds  
With all the virtues which consecrate thine.

And on the wall of the apse this was engraved:

Pure and fertile source of happiness,  
Tender friendship! my heart rests with thee;  
The world where thou art not is a desert for me;  
Art thou in a desert? thou takest the place of this world.

This last motto is by Cérutti.

The cast of *Love and Friendship* is not the only object which has disappeared from the temple of Betz. There was also there a "circular bed," where meditation invited

Romantic Love and ambitious Hope

to be seated.

This "circular bed" was also a poetic invention. A document, discovered by M. de Ségur in the archives of Beauvais, shows us that Cérutti was

commissioned to "furnish" the Temple of Friendship. As his archæological knowledge was insufficient, he addressed himself to the author of the *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis*. We possess the reply of Abbé Barthélémy. The latter seems quite embarrassed: he states that the ancients prayed standing, on their knees or seated on the ground, and that there were no seats in the temples; he thinks that one might take as a model either the curule chair of the Senators, or the throne on which the gods were represented as seated, or even a bench, a sofa. . . . "Besides," he ended, "I believe, like M. Cérutti, that as friendship is a goddess of all times, we may furnish her as we will."

Quatrains, sensibilities and puerilities, all these do not prevent the temple of Betz from being one of the most perfect works of the Greco-Roman Renaissance of the last years of the eighteenth century. (Note 27.) In the gardens of the Little Trianon, Mique produced nothing more exquisite than this work of Le Roy. And how adorable they are, these little monuments, supreme witnesses of classic tradition, suddenly revivified by the discoveries of the antiquaries, by the *Voyages* of the Count de Caylus, by the first excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii! With what surety of taste, with what subtlety of imagination, have the lines and the forms of ancient art been

accommodated to the adornment of the northern landscape! It is the last flower of our architecture.

It is necessary to hearken to and meditate upon the instruction, the eternal instruction given us by this temple so gracefully placed before the verdant meadows of a valley of the Ile-de-France. The caprice of a sentimental princess dedicated it to friendship. Let us dedicate it in our grateful thought to the strong and charming god whose decrees were respected and whose power was venerated for three centuries by poets and artists without an ingratitude, without a blasphemy. This sanctuary was doubtless the homage of a disappearing piety: already those who built it celebrated in the neighboring groves the rites of a new cult; there they deified disorder, ruin and melancholy; there they abandoned themselves to childish and dangerous superstitions; already romanticism and exoticism mastered hearts and imaginations. The more reason for admiring and cherishing the last altars where men sacrificed to reason, order and beauty. Besides, behold: a century has elapsed; the false ruins are ruined; the false tombs are no more than rubbish; the Chinese kiosks have disappeared; yet, upon the hillside, the four Ionic columns still show the immortal grace of their spreading bases and their fine volutes.

Another stage, and the last, to the “Baths of the Princess.” This rustic retreat had been constructed in the midst of the woods. The woods have been cut and now there remains no more than a single clump of trees in the midst of a meadow, overshadowing the basin of a spring. Here were formerly placed remnants of sculpture in the antique fashion,

Marbles broken and dispersed without arrangement.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Graces sometimes came to rest themselves there.

\* \* \* \* \*

Seated near these benches, we easily forget ourselves;  
Voluptuousness follows the shadow and melancholy. . . .

Melancholy was not the only visitor to this charming retreat. Let us rather listen to the Prince de Ligne describing the “baths” of an English garden. His prose will console us for the verses of Cérutti: “Women love to be deceived, perhaps that they may sometimes avenge themselves for it. Occupy yourselves with them in your gardens. Manage, stroll with, amuse this charming sex; let the walks be well beaten, that they may not dampen their pretty feet, and let irregular, narrow, shaded paths, odoriferous of roses, jasmines, orange blossoms, violets and honeysuckles, coax these ladies to the bath or to repose, where they find their fancy work, their knitting, their filet and especially their black

writing desk where sand or something else is always lacking, but which contains the secrets unknown to lovers and husbands, and which, placed upon their knees, is useful to them in writing lies with a crow's plume."

With this pleasing picture, let us leave the gardens of Betz.

\* \* \* \* \*

I continued to read the *Coup d'œil sur les Jardins* of the Prince de Ligne, whence are extracted the pretty things which I have just quoted, and I wish to reproduce the ending of this work, which is the whole philosophy of the English garden.

"Happy, finally, if I have been able to succeed (the Prince de Ligne did not content himself with writing about gardens; he had transformed a part of the park of Bel-Oeil in the new fashion), if, in embellishing nature, or rather in approaching her, let us rather say in making her felt, I could give taste for her! From our gardens, as I have announced, she would lead us elsewhere; our minds would no longer have recourse to other powers than her; our purer hearts would be the most precious temples that could be dedicated to her. Our souls would be warmed by her merit, truth would return to dwell among us. Justice would quit the heavens, and, a hundred times more

happy than in Olympus, the gods would pray men to receive them among themselves."

In the midst of their philosophical and rural amusements, while they "embellished" the woods of Betz and purified their hearts by tasting nature, the Princess of Monaco and the Prince of Condé doubtless spoke similar words.

Nevertheless the omniscient gods remain in Olympus: they knew Cérutti and foresaw the morrow.

It is just this which gives a singular melancholy to the gardens which were laid out in France on the eve of the Revolution, a true melancholy, a profound melancholy, no longer the light and voluptuous melancholy with which the romantic "friends of nature" pleased themselves. It was scarcely five years after the Princess of Monaco had finished designing and ornamenting her gardens when it was necessary for her to abandon everything to follow Condé and partake with him the perils, the sufferings and the mortifications of emigration, to face the privations of the life of the camp and the humiliations of defeat, to flee, always to flee across Europe before the victorious Revolution, and to learn at each stage of the bloody death of a relative or a friend. Such memories kill the smile awakened by the childishness of the structures scattered through

the gardens of Betz; they communicate a touching grace to the allegories of the Temple of Friendship; they envelop the entire park with a touching sadness. (Note 28.)

## XIV

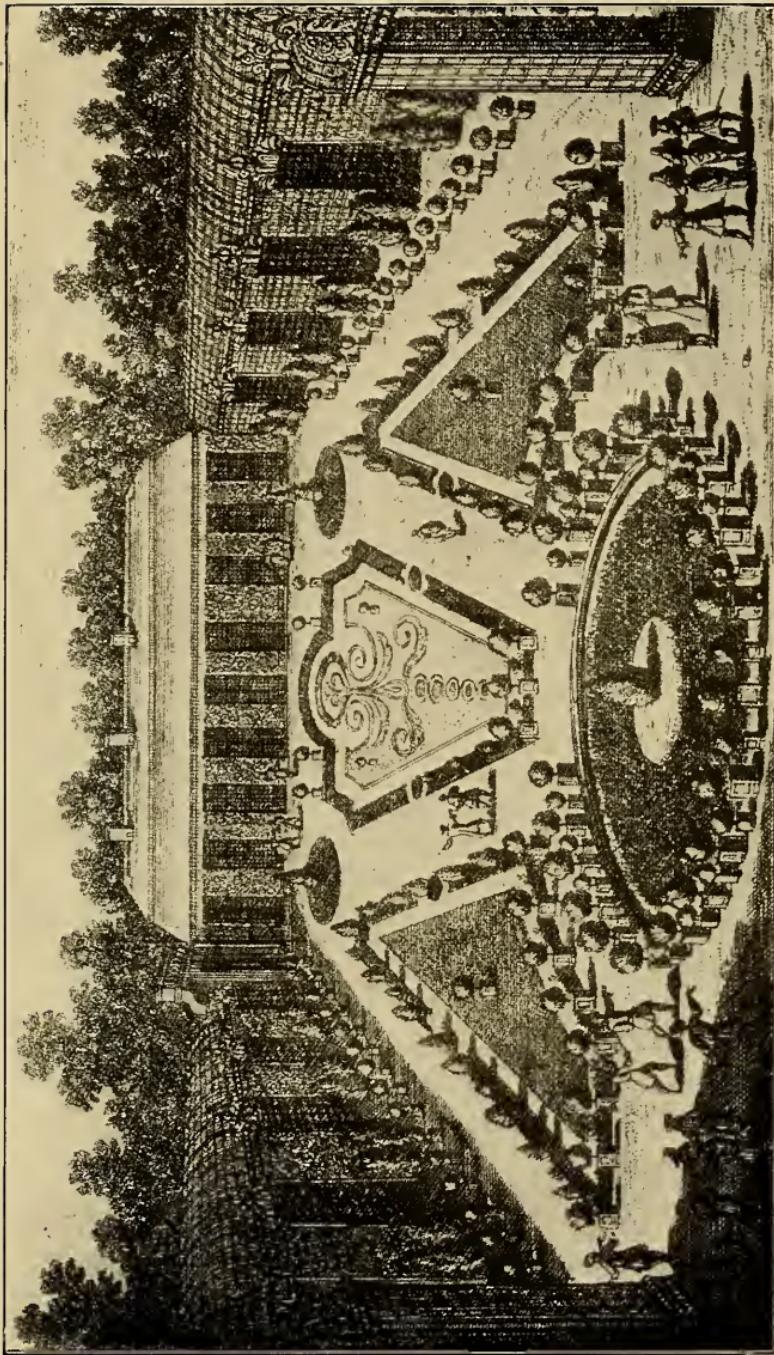
### CHANTILLY

#### I — THE HOUSE OF SYLVIE

THE most charming part of the gardens of Chantilly lies behind the Château d'Enghien and is called the Park of Sylvie, in memory of Marie Félice Orsini, the wife of Henri II de Montmorency, the "Sylvie" of Théophile. On the site of the little house where the Duchess had received and sheltered the proscribed poet, the great Condé built a pavilion, and pierced the neighboring woods with "superb alleys"; his son, Henri Jules, added to it the amusement of a labyrinth.

The park and the house of Sylvie have been reconstructed in our day at the order of the Duc d'Aumale. Overarching avenues lead to the pavilion, which we perceive through a curtain of verdure as soon as we pass the gate of honor of the château. Behind the little structure, an elegant trellis encloses regular parterres, and the picture thus composed almost reproduced the picture of the house of Sylvie as it is shown to us by an engraving of Pérelle.

The Duc d'Aumale has enlarged the pavilion



From the engraving by Pérelle

THE SALON OF THE GARDEN OF SYLVIE



of the seventeenth century by a lovely round hall, decorated by beautiful carved wainscoting, removed from one of the hunting lodges of the forest of Dreux. The other rooms are ornamented with Chinese silks and lacquers, with Beauvais and Gobelins tapestries, with precious furniture and various hunting pictures. We see there also two modern paintings by Olivier Merson, one representing Théophile and Sylvie, the other Mlle. de Clermont and M. de Melun; they recall two famous chapters of the chronicles of Chantilly. The first belongs to history, for nothing is more certain than the misadventure of the unfortunate Théophile. The second is known to us only from a novel of Madame de Genlis in which, for lack of documents, it is difficult to decide which parts are due to the imagination of the author; we might even inquire if this moving and tragic anecdote is anything more than simple romantic fiction.

Of these two stories, let us call up first the most distant, that which gave to the charming wood of Chantilly the adornment of a delightful name and of some elegant verses.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1623, when Théophile composed his odes on the *Maison de Sylvie*, Chantilly belonged to Henri II de Montmorency, grandson of the grand constable Anne de Montmorency, and to his wife

Marie Félice Orsini. Their tragic destiny is well known, how the Duke, involved by Gaston d'Orléans in a foolish prank, lost his head in 1632 and how the Duchess went to hide her tears and her mourning with the Visitandines de Moulins. But at this time they lived happy and powerful in the most beautiful of the residences of France and everything smiled on their youth; he was twenty-nine years old; she was twenty-four. Louis XIII continued toward Henri II the great friendship which Henri IV had always witnessed toward his "crony," Henri I de Montmorency. Like his father he often came to Chantilly.

The château, built by Pierre Chambiges for the constable Anne de Montmorency, on the foundations of the old feudal fortress, decorated by the greatest artists of the Renaissance, was still being embellished day by day: the original gardens, laid out to the west of the château and consisting of a few flower beds, had been enlarged. In this magnificent house the Duke held a most brilliant court: he was, says Tallemant, "brave, rich, gallant, liberal, danced well, sat well on horseback and always had men of brains in his employ, who made verses for him, who conversed with him about a million things, and who told him what decisions it was necessary to make on the matters which happened in those times."

Among these “men of brains,” who ate the bread of the Duc de Montmorency, the most celebrated was the poet Théophile de Viau, a native of Clairac sur le Lot, a Huguenot and a “cadet of Gascony.”

Under Henri IV, men of his religion and of his country were well received at court: it was under “the Béarnais” that Paris commenced to dislike them. The young man from the region of Agen had therefore left his little paternal manor and settled in the capital to seek his fortune when he was twenty years old, in 1610. The assassination of the King must have shaken his hopes for a moment. But Théophile was soon assured of the protection of the Duc de Montmorency; he found means to retain it in the midst of the frightful catastrophes of his existence. In any case, this sort of domesticity did not weigh too heavily on his shoulders, for he said to his master:

Now, I am very happy in your obedience.  
In my captivity I have much license,  
And any other than you would end by tiring  
Of giving so much freedom to a serf so libertine.

The fame of the poet Théophile has suffered much from two lines by Boileau:

... To prefer Théophile to Malherbe or to Racan  
And the false money of Tasso to the pure gold of Virgil.

So, when the Romanticists began to revive the classics and to discover far-distant ancestors

in old French literature, they thought of Théophile: Boileau himself pointed him out to them. In *Les Grotesques*, Gautier rehabilitated him and called him a "truly great poet," esteeming that one cannot make bad verses when one bears the glorious Christian name of Théophile. To completely demonstrate this to us, he quoted several pieces by his namesake which he abridged and even tastefully corrected — a stratagem which revolted the scrupulous Sainte-Beuve. To tell the truth, now that we are free from romantic prejudices, it is difficult for us not to think that on this occasion, as on many others, Boileau was right. Among the poets of the time of Louis XIII, Théophile is perhaps the one whom we now read with the least pleasure. We find in him neither the beauty, the force and the style of Malherbe, nor that so lively sentiment for nature which gives so much value to various bits by Racan, nor the vigorous local color of Saint Amant. He shows a facile and sometimes brilliant imagination; but he lacks taste and restraint in a continuous and desolating fashion. La Bruyère has finely expressed this in comparing Théophile with Malherbe: "The other (Théophile), without choice, without exactness, with a free and unequal pen, overloads his descriptions too much, emphasizes the details; he makes a dissection; sometimes

he paints, he exaggerates, he overpasses the truth of nature; he makes a romance of it."

Théophile, who had a brilliant mind, rendered justice to Malherbe; but he decorated with the name of originality his distaste for labor, his scorn of rules:

Let him who will imitate the marvels of others.  
Malherbe has done very well, but he did it for himself.

I love his fame and not his lesson.

I know some who make verses only in the modern fashion,  
Who seek Phœbus at mid-day with a lantern,  
Who scratch their French so much that they tear it all to tatters,  
Blaming everything which is easy only to their own taste.

*Rules displease me, I write confusedly;*  
A good mind never does anything except easily.

I wish to make verses which shall not be constrained,  
To send forth my mind beyond petty designs,  
To seek out secret places where nothing displeases me,  
To meditate at leisure, to dream quite at my ease,  
To waste a whole hour in admiring myself in the water,  
To hear, as if in a dream, the flowing of a brook,  
To write within a wood, to interrupt myself, to be silent by myself,  
To compose a quatrain without thinking of doing it.

Here are eight lines which make us think of La Fontaine, in accent and in sentiment. But we would be embarrassed if we had to find twenty others as well turned in all the works of Théophile. What emphatic odes! What fastidious elegies! What feeble sonnets! Without the divine gift, this kind of nonchalance leads the poet either to platitudes or to disorder. Théophile is not lyrical. Here and there, by fits and starts, a few striking

images appear, but the strophes come forth without grace, with terrible monotony. His love poems are frozen: gallantry mingled with sensuality takes the place of passion with him, and while it sometimes inspires a few lines which are happy by reason of gentleness or voluptuousness, most often they are poor nonsense. His best odes, like *Matin* or *Solitude*, whence we may select a few delicately shaded lines, repel us as a whole because of his fashion of painting too minutely, too dryly, too exactly. . . .

So, what caused the great fame of Théophile in the seventeenth century and later gave him the indulgence of the Romanticists, was much less his poetic talent than the renown of his adventures. As Gautier took care to inform us, this poor devil was born “under a mad star”; he knew exile and prison, he just escaped being burned alive for atheism and libertinage.

In a page of charming prose (Théophile’s prose is better than his verse) the poet has told us his taste and his philosophy: “One must have a passion not only for men of virtue, for beautiful women, but also for all sorts of beautiful things. I love a fine day, clear fountains, the sight of mountains, the spread of a wide plain, beautiful forests; the ocean, its calms, its swells, its rocky shores; I love also all which more particularly



C'est jcy le portrait, l'exemple, et le sommeire  
Des plus rares Esprits;  
Mais l'immortel crayon de Virgile, et d'Homere  
Se voit dans ses Escriptes.

THÉOPHILE DE VIAU



touches the senses: music, flowers, fine clothes, hunting, blooded horses, sweet smells, good cheer; but my desires cling to all these only as a pleasure and not as a labor; when one or another of these diversions entirely occupies a soul, it passes from affection to madness and brutality; the strongest passion which I can have never holds me so strongly that I cannot quit it in a day. If I love, it is as much as I am loved, and, as neither nature nor fortune has given me much power to please, this passion with me has never continued very long either its pleasure or its pain. I cling more closely to study and to good cheer than to all the rest. Books have sometimes tired me, but they have never worn me out, and wine has often rejoiced me, but never intoxicated. . . ." [Once more the memory of La Fontaine crosses our minds and we recall *The Hymn of Passion* at the end of *Psyche*.] Théophile is thus a perfect Epicurean by birth and by principle, an Epicurean in the diversity and the brevity of his enjoyments, an Epicurean in the prudent and wise administration of his pleasures.

Did he carry further than he admits the practice of doctrine, and freedom of manners? Did he use the free and obscene speech which has been ascribed to him? Had he still other passions of which he says nothing in this public confession?

It is only necessary to read Tallemant to be instructed as to the way of living common to libertines at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and to judge that, even if Théophile practiced all the vices which his enemies have ascribed to him, fate was nevertheless very cruel in inflicting on him a punishment which so many others might then have merited.

The poet's misfortune was to unloose against himself the ire of some Jesuits who — for reasons which have remained obscure — sought for his destruction with frenzied zeal. Imprudence in writing and speaking had already compromised him: when exiled for the first time, he had had to seek a refuge in Gascony, in Languedoc, even to take refuge in England for several months. But he had been recalled and, following an august example, and thinking that Paris was well worth a mass, he had abjured Calvinism: he could thenceforth believe himself in safety. Then burst the storm. A collection of licentious and sacrilegious poetry appeared at Paris in 1622 under the title of *Parnasse Satyrique*; certain pieces were attributed to Théophile, who endeavored, but in vain, to disavow the publication. A year after, he was accused before Parliament and condemned, in contumacy, to be burned alive. On the eve of his sentence, Father Garasse had pub-

lished a formidable quarto entitled *La Doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps*, in which were heaped up calumnies, insults and invectives against Théophile and his disciples, whom the Jesuit called “the school of young calves.” While he was being executed in effigy upon the Place de Grève, and while the Jesuits aroused the court and the magistrates against him, Théophile prudently escaped to Chantilly and from there set out for the frontier of the kingdom. But he was arrested near Saint-Quentin, brought back to Paris, thrown into the prison of Ravaillac. He remained there two years waiting for a new trial. The Jesuits were in charge of the proceedings and the investigation. The poet was again found guilty. But this time the sentence was less rigorous: it was banishment. He died two years later, at the age of thirty-six.

During these trials, the Duke and Duchess de Montmorency had not ceased to interest themselves in their protégé. More than once the Duke had intervened in his favor, but without success. After the first sentence he gave him asylum at Chantilly in a “cool hall” built in the woods at the end of the pool. It was the memories of this retreat that the poet later evoked in his prison, to make them the subject of the ten little odes which he entitled, *La Maison de Sylvie*.



I doubt that the odes of the *Maison de Sylvie* are superior to the other works of Théophile. However, if any one asked me: "What must I read by Théophile?" I would reply to him: "*La Maison de Sylvie*, on condition that you read it at Chantilly beside the pool." The great poets have sometimes added a special grace or nobility to the landscapes which they have described. But it is also true that ancient verses, whose attractiveness seems lost today, reassume an indescribable savor in the very places which have formerly inspired them. The poet sometimes makes us better feel the beauty of nature; but by a mysterious sorcery, nature can return a breath of life to dead poems.

To leave, before dying,  
The living features of a painting  
Which can never perish  
Except by the loss of nature,  
I pass golden pencils  
Over the most revered spots  
Where virtue takes refuge,  
Whose door was open to me  
To put my head in shelter,  
When they burned my effigy.

Poor rhymer, they are indeed effaced, the lines of your "golden pencils"! You promised yourself immortality, you promised it to Sylvie:

Thus, under modest vows  
My verses promise Sylvie  
That charming fame which posterity  
Calls a second life;

But you added with more reason:

What if my writings, scorned,  
Cannot be authorized  
As witnesses of her glory,  
These streams, these woods,  
Will assume souls and voices,  
To preserve its memory.

Such has been fate: it is the soul and the voices of the waters, the woods and the rocks which preserve today the memory of the beautiful Italian princess and her poor devil of a poet!

It is not for the pure beauty of the verses (which, however, do not lack grace), it is for the elegance of the picture which they evoke from far away, from very far away, that we love today to read once more these lines:

One evening when the salty waves  
Lent their soft bed  
To the four red coursers  
Which are yoked by the sun,  
I bent my eyes upon the edge  
Of a bed where the Naiad sleeps,  
And, watching Sylvie fish,  
I saw the fishes fight  
To see which would soonest lose its life  
In honor of her fishhooks.  
Warning against noise with one hand  
And throwing her line with the other,  
She causes that, at the onset of night,  
The day should decline more sweetly.  
The sun feared to light her  
And feared to go away;  
The stars did not dare to appear,  
The waves did not dare to ripple,  
The zephyr did not dare to pass,  
The very grass restrained its growing.

(This is the scene which M. Oliver Merson desired to represent upon one of the walls of

Sylvie's pavilion; I do not dare to affirm that he rendered all its charm.)

Despite a very obscure and very pretentious mythological machinery, we may still enjoy the Tritons transformed into a troop of white deer by a single glance of Sylvie, and gamboling timidly among the thickets of the wood:

Their hearts, deprived of blood by fear,  
Can only with timidity  
Behold the sky or trample on the earth.

(Here is one of those pictures which abound in Théophile and disconcert the reader, even when the coolness of the charming grove disposes him to every indulgence.)

We will also discover an Albanesque grace in a combat of Loves and Nereids in the waters of the pool:

Now together, now scattered,  
They shine in this dark veil  
And beneath the waves which they have pierced  
Allow their shadow to disappear;  
Sometimes in a clear night,  
Which shines with the fire of their eyes,  
Without any shadow of clouds,  
Diana quits her swain  
And goes down below to swim  
With her naked stars.

But the plays of the Naiads are not the only visions which present themselves to the memory of the prisoner in the inky dungeon where the hatred of Father Garasse has condemned him

to rhyme his idyls. He remembers that one day Thyrsis, whom he loves with a "chaste and faithful friendship," came to visit him at Chantilly and to tell him a frightful and interminable nightmare in which were announced all his future misfortunes. This episode might appear superfluous if it did not give Théophile the opportunity to establish in eleven lines the innocence of his manners, an opportune apology after the defamations of the Jesuit. . . . Soon, casting aside these unpleasant images, he returns to the marvels of the "enchanted park"; he sings the perfume of the flowers, the glances of his mistress, the coolness of the waters, the graces of the spring, the fecundity of nature and the concert of birds which salutes Sylvie in the woods. . . . And the ode terminates by an abrupt flattery addressed to the King. But he has not yet exhausted the whole chaplet of lovable remembrances; he diverts himself by imagining the song of the nightingales, and in the darkness of his prison, it is always Chantilly that he sees. How sad that a better poet might not have treated this charming thought!

Forth from my dark tower  
My soul sends out its rays which pierce  
To this park which the eyes of day  
Traverse with so much difficulty.  
My senses have the whole picture of it:  
I feel the flowers at the edge of the water.

I sense the coolness which endews them.  
The princess comes to sit there.  
I see, as she goes there in the evening,  
How the day flees and respects her.

The last ode is a promenade about the pool, and, while lacking in poetic beauty, it contains some topographical indications which it would be amusing to verify with the aid of the plans and the documents of the archives. There is a question there of a "lodge today deserted" where Alcandre once came to enjoy solitude. Alcandre is Henri IV, and we thus know the place of the "King's Garden," a retreat where Henri IV loved to pass his time, when he came to Chantilly. Then Théophile leaves on the left a thick wood favorable for lovers' meetings, a "quarter for the Faun and for the Satyr," and stops at a chapel, probably the little chapel of Saint Paul, which still exists today; he remains there a long time and prays the Lord, with the fervor of a poor poet persecuted by the Jesuits and accused of atheism; but words, already sufficiently undisciplined when he wishes to employ them to sing the sport of the nymphs, refuse to obey him when he seizes the harp of David: his prayer is a miracle of platitude. . . .

And if, following my advice, you shall one day read *La Maison de Sylvie* under the trees of Chantilly, perhaps, despite its poverty of style and monotony of rhymes, you may still find some



THE GREAT CONDÉ



pleasure there, in spite of the disdain of Boileau, in spite of the enthusiasms of Gautier.

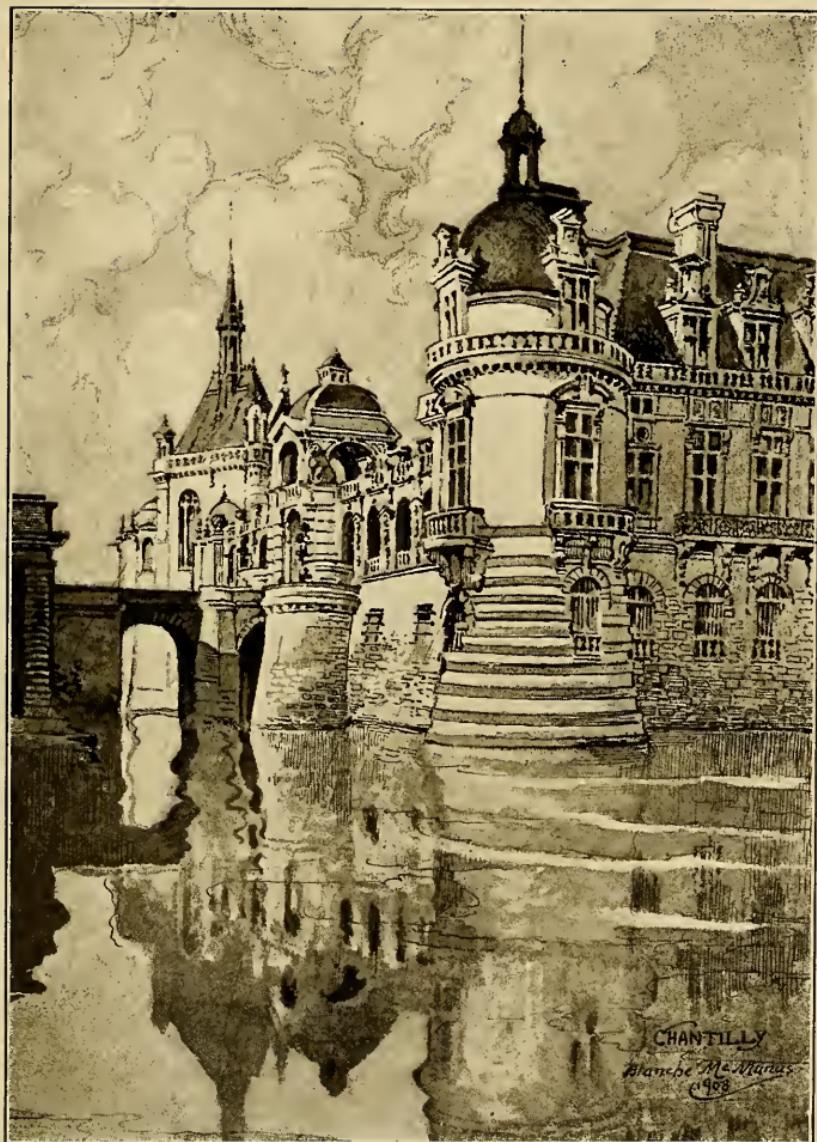
## II — MADEMOISELLE DE CLERMONT

We are in 1724. A century has elapsed since the day when the proscribed poet found asylum in a little house built at the extremity of the pool, and now there remains hardly a remnant of the Chantilly of the Montmorencies. Le Nôtre and Mansart have been here. Immense regular gardens, traversed by canals, decorated with statues and fountains, have replaced the modest garden plots of the Renaissance. The swelling woods which neighbored the château are transformed to a majestically clipped park. Of the ancient buildings, the great Condé has allowed only the little château to remain, and he has arranged the apartments of even this in a new fashion. For the old manor house which the architects of the sixteenth century had transformed into a luxurious, elegant and picturesque residence, he has substituted a veritable palace, with grand though monotonous façades, flanked with sufficiently disgraceful pepper boxes. He has built the orangery and the theater, and created a mass of cascades, basins and fountains which rival Versailles. Henri Jules has continued the work of his father, built a house for his gentlemen in place of the farm of Bucan, estab-

lished a magnificent menagerie at Vineuil, designed the labyrinth of Sylvie's grove and dispersed throughout the park a multitude of marbles copied from the antique. Now the master of Chantilly is the Duc de Bourbon, *Monsieur le Duc*, Prime Minister of the King; he also is a great lover of gardens and the buildings; he transforms the chapel, he demolishes and reconstructs the three faces of the interior court of the château, and he confides to Jean Aubert the task of finishing the construction of the Great Stables, commenced by Mansart. (Note 29.)

Chantilly is then, after Versailles and Marly, the most beautiful of the residences of France. It is also the theater of the most sumptuous festivals. M. le Duc there spends royally an immense fortune, which is still growing from operations in the funds. His mistress, Agnes de Pléneuf, Marquise de Prie, holds a veritable court there.

The King comes to pass two months at Chantilly and, every day, he is offered "the diversion of stag hunting or wild boar hunting." The evenings are reserved for the opera, for the comedy and for the dance. The gazettes of Paris describe with a thousand details the hecatombs of wild boars, the lansquenet parties and the suppers at which shine the three sisters of M. le Duc, M<sup>lle</sup>s. de



From a drawing by Blanche McManus

### CHÂTEAU OF CHANTILLY



Charolais, de Clermont and de Sens. The peddlers offer in the streets the list of expert beauties whom chance, added by Madame de Prie, has put in the path of the young King, and for whom the young King has not lusted.

On August 30, 1724, one of the friends of the Duc de Bourbon, the Duc de Melun, is killed in one of the hunts given in honor of the King. Here is the story from the gazettes: "Towards seven o'clock in the evening, half a league from the château, the Duc de Melun, riding at a gallop in one of the forest ways, was wounded by the stag which was being tracked and which was almost at bay. The blow which he gave in passing was so hard that horse and horseman were thrown. The Duc de Melun was aided at first by the Duc de Bourbon and the Comte de Clermont. Sieur Flandin du Montblanc, surgeon to the King, gave him first aid and had him carried to the château where he died today, the 31st, at five o'clock in the morning, in the thirtieth year of his age, after having received all the sacraments and made his will."

This tragic event moves the guests of the château, for the Duc de Melun is related to all the great families of the kingdom. The King sheds a few tears and talks of leaving the same evening. But he is made to understand that so sudden a

departure will be interpreted in a fashion not very complimentary to the Prime Minister. He consents to remain two days longer at Chantilly and returns to Versailles.

\* \* \* \* \*

Madame de Genlis is the author of a historical novel entitled *Mademoiselle de Clermont*. In it she relates that this princess had secretly married the Duc de Melun eight days before the accident which led to his death. Of the history of the amours of Mlle. de Clermont and M. de Melun, she had composed a touching and dramatic little story.

At the bottom of the first page of this work she puts the following note: "The substance of this history, and almost all the details which it contains, are true; the author received them from a person (the late Marquise de Puisieux-Sillery) who was as noteworthy for the sincerity of her character as for the superiority of her mind, and whom Mlle. de Clermont honored for twenty years, up to the day of her death, with her most intimate friendship. It was at Chantilly itself and in the fatal alley, which still bears the name of *Melun*, that this story was told for the first time to the author, who then wrote down its principal features and afterward forgot this little manuscript for thirty years. It was neither

finished, nor written for the public, but no historic detail has been excised."

Is not this merely one of those subterfuges which romancers use to persuade us that they have "invented nothing" and to give us the illusion that it "really happened"? Or did Madame de Genlis really receive the confidences of a well-informed old lady?

First, we must note that if the author wished to mystify her readers, she succeeded on this occasion. When the Duc d'Aumale had Mlle. de Clermont and M. de Melun painted as a pendant to Théophile and Sylvie, he accepted the truth of the story told by Madame de Genlis. It may possibly be said that the Duc d'Aumale could not refuse such a species of posthumous homage to the tutor of Louis Philippe. But all the historians who have written of Chantilly have in turn told the story of the adventure of Mlle. de Clermont, without even discussing its probability. . . . And now let us read the novel of Madame de Genlis.

It is a short and very agreeable task. The contemporaries of Madame de Genlis united in considering *Mademoiselle de Clermont* as her masterpiece and as a masterpiece. On the first point, I am ready to believe them; I cannot compare *Mademoiselle de Clermont* with the

innumerable romances, tales and novels of the same author: I do not know them. As a child, I read *Les Veillées du Château*, and I cannot say today if it is necessary to set them above the similar works of Bouilly and of Berquin. As to the *Souvenirs de Félicie*, it has always seemed to me a sufficiently diverting book, full of doubtful anecdotes and of untruthful portraits, but in which the author shows her true self, with all her vanities of a woman and all her ridiculous traits as a writer. Is *Mademoiselle de Clermont* a masterpiece? Perhaps it was, but it is no longer. It remains a delightful book. It has great merits: marvelous rapidity, perfect skill and ease in the knitting together of the different episodes, a facile, supple and natural way of telling. If we confine ourselves to the composition of the work, it is a model: neither Mérimée nor Maupassant has written anything more concise or more polished. Without doubt, the style of Madame de Genlis seems terribly out of date today; her simple, limpid, perfectly correct language entirely lacks accent; her somewhat vague expressions have today a trace of age and colorlessness; in the tragic passages she exasperates us a little by the abuse of points of suspense; finally we are sometimes tired out by the lazy sensibility of the writer, the simplicity of the maxims which she

inserts in her narration, her childish efforts to give a moral appearance to the most passionate of adventures; we discover too often the author of *Les Veillées du Château* in a story which we would have preferred to have told by the author of *La Chartreuse de Parme*. But the pleasure of a well-written story is so vivid that even in spite of the affectations, the artifices and the childishness, we still feel the emotion of the drama.

The two principals of the story are Mademoiselle de Clermont, sister of the Duc de Bourbon, and the Duc de Melun.

“Mlle. de Clermont received from nature and from fortune all the gifts and all the goods which can be envied: royal birth, perfect beauty, a fine and delicate mind, a sensitive soul and that sweetness, that equality of character which are so precious and so rare, especially in persons of her rank. Simple, natural, chary of words, she always expressed herself delightfully and wisely; there was as much reason as charm in her conversation. The sound of her voice penetrated to the bottom of the heart, and an air of sentiment, spread over her whole person, gave interest to her least important actions; such was Mlle. de Clermont at the age of twenty.” She appears at Chantilly and, immediately, the beauty of the place, which offers “all that a sensitive soul can love in the

way of rural and solitary delights," the splendor of "the most ingenious and the most sumptuous feasts," the pleasure of her first homage and her first praise, intoxicate her youthful heart.

Portrait of M. de Melun: "His character, his virtues, entitle him to personal consideration, independently of his fortune and of his birth. Although his figure was noble and his features mild and intellectual, his outer man showed no brilliancy; he was cold and distracted in society; though gifted with a superior mind, he was not at all what is called an amiable man, because he felt no desire to please, not from disdain or pride, but from an indifference which he had constantly preserved up to this period. . . . Finally the Duc de Melun, though endowed with the most noble politeness, had no gallantry; his very sensitiveness and extreme delicacy had preserved him till then from any engagement formed in caprice; aged scarcely thirty years, he was still only too capable of experiencing a grand passion, but, because of his character and his morals, he was safe from all the seductions of coquetry."

One of the favorite diversions of Mlle. de Clermont was to read romances aloud before a few friends, and on these occasions, they never failed to praise her reading and her sensitiveness. "The women wept, the men listened with the

appearance of admiration and sentiment; they talked quite low among themselves; it was easy to guess what they said; sometimes they were overheard (vanity has so fine an ear!), and the hearer gathered the words *ravishing, enchanting.*"

We will soon see if this story is true. But let us emphasize in passing the improbability of this little picture. Is it credible that people wept so abundantly at Chantilly in 1724?

A single man, always present at these lectures, preserves an obstinate silence: it is M. de Melun. The attitude of this motionless and silent auditor pricks the curiosity of Mlle. de Clermont. She questions. The Duke lets her understand that the reading of romances seems futile and frivolous to him. On the morrow she inflicts on her auditors the reading of a book of history. And the intrigue is begun.

Mlle. de Clermont seeks the company of the Marquise de G. . . , a tiresome and loquacious person, but the cousin of M. de Melun: her presence takes the curse off the promenades and conversations in the gardens of Chantilly. During one of these promenades, a petition is presented to the princess. She promises to hand it to her brother. But, in the hurry of dressing for the ball, she forgets her promise. M. de Melun, without saying anything about it, picks up the petition which was forgotten

upon a table, and obtains from M. le Duc the favor which was asked, pretending that he is fulfilling the wishes of Mlle. de Clermont. Confusion of the forgetful young girl, who makes a vow not to appear at a ball for a year. . . . I will not say that this sentimental catastrophe is the most happy episode of the novel of Madame de Genlis.

More delicate, more truthful, more touching — with an agreeable dash of romance — is the story of the incidents which lead up to the inevitable declaration. Mlle. de Clermont is the first to avow her passion. Her birth and rank forbid M. de Melun to seek the hand of a princess of the blood royal. He goes away, he returns. Oaths are exchanged, and it is finally Mlle. de Clermont who proposes a secret marriage.

The two lovers appoint a meeting in a cottage. M. de Melun throws himself at the feet of Mlle. de Clermont and abandons himself to all the transports of passion. Suddenly he rises and in a stifled voice begs her for the last time to abandon him.

“No, no,” returns Mlle. de Clermont, “I will not flee from him whom I can love without shame, without reserve and without remorse, if he dares, as well as myself, to brave the most odious prejudices.” At these words the Duke regarded

Mlle. de Clermont with surprise and shock. "I am twenty-two years old," she continued; "the authors of my being no longer exist; the age and the rank of my brother give him only a fictitious authority over me, for nature has made me his equal."

"Great God!" cried the Duke, "what are you trying to make me think?"

"What! would I then be doing such an extraordinary thing? Did not Mlle. de Montpensier marry the Duc de Lauzun?"

"What do you say? Oh, heavens!"

"Did not the proudest of our kings at first approve this union? Later a court intrigue made him revoke his permission; but he had given it. Your birth is not inferior to that of the Duc de Lauzun. Mlle. de Montpensier was blamed by nobody, and she would not have failed to appear interesting in all eyes, because she was young and especially because she was loved."

"Who? Me? By such an excess I would abuse your sentiments and your inexperience!"

"There is no longer time for us to flee. . . . There is no longer time for us to deceive ourselves by discussing impossible sacrifices. . . . As we cannot break the tie which binds us, we must render it legitimate and sanctify it."

The next night, at two o'clock in the morning,

clothed in a simple white muslin dress, she leaves the château. As she crosses the courtyard, her skirt catches on one of the ornaments of the pedestal of Condé's statue. She turns around in terror and believes that she must relate to her great ancestor the reasons for her attire. This nocturnal discourse is not one of the most ingenious inventions of Madame de Genlis.

In the same hut where the supreme explanation had occurred a chaplain secretly unites the new Lauzun to the new Montpensier.

Eight days later the King arrives at Chantilly. Festivals and hunts. M. de Melun is thrown off his horse and wounded by a stag: we have seen the true story of the accident.

Mlle. de Clermont is a few steps from the place where her husband is wounded; her carriage serves to transport the wounded man to the château. Passion is stronger than convention: she confesses all to M. le Duc. He, to avoid a scandal, feigns a trifle of indulgence and persuades the unfortunate lady to conceal her grief until the King's departure. She is buoyed up by false news, is told that the wound is not mortal and is not informed of the death of M. de Melun until Louis XV has left Chantilly.

\* \* \* \* \*

History or romance?



From the pastelle by Rosalba Carriera

LOUIS XV AS DAUPHIN



Let us first remark that, whether history or romance, there is nothing to localize this story at the House of Sylvie. Madame de Genlis simply says to us that she thought it out in Sylvie's wood, that is all. In the great gallery of the Musée Condé, a painting by Nattier shows us the delicate countenance and the ardent eyes of Mlle. de Clermont. The princess is there represented in the guise of a nymph; her elbow rests on an overturned urn whence flows a limpid stream; a Love smiles at her feet; near her a servant holds a ewer bound with gold and from it fills a cup. In the background a pretty garden pavilion is outlined against a winter sky. This pavilion is that of the "Mineral Springs," and thus explains the allegories of the portrait. This little structure disappeared more than a century ago: it was situated in a part of the gardens which formerly extended over the hill of La Nonette, between the little stream and the main street of Chantilly: this land was separated from the domain during the Revolution and is now occupied by private owners. Possibly, at some time, some one has taken the pavilion in Nattier's picture for the House of Sylvie and perhaps this confusion explains why the souvenir of Mlle. de Clermont and M. de Melun has been placed beside the souvenir of Théophile and the Duchess of Montmorency.

But do we find here only an error of topography? Did Mlle. de Clermont secretly marry the Duc de Melun?

What might make us doubt the truth of the anecdote is primarily the character of the author who related it to us. Madame de Genlis made a travesty of everything: the past, the present and even the future. She put romanticism and romance into her own existence as well as that of others; whether it is a question of events of which she was witness or of those which she relates from hearsay, it is never prudent to accept her word without confirmation.

Let us apply the test. Neither in the memoirs nor in the letters of the first half of the eighteenth century have I discovered an allusion to the intrigue of one of the sisters of M. le Duc with the gentleman whom a stag mortally wounded in the forest of Chantilly on August 30, 1724. I have questioned the man who today best knows the history of Chantilly, M. Gustav Macon: he told me that he has never met a mention of the adventure of Mlle. de Clermont before 1802, the date at which Madame de Genlis published her novel.

We do not know much about the pretty naiad painted by Nattier. We know the charm of her features and we know that Montesquieu wrote for her the *Temple de Gnide*, "with no other aim



PORTRAIT OF MADEMOISELLE DE CLERMONT, BY NATTIER



than to make a poetic picture of voluptuousness." But an anecdote told by Duclos will show us a person somewhat different from the heroine of Madame de Genlis. When the marriage of Louis XV with Marie Leczinska was decided upon, the Duc d'Antin was sent to Strasbourg as an envoy to the Polish princess. He pronounced in these circumstances a discourse in which, with singular lack of tact, he found it necessary to make an allusion to the project which M. le Duc had recently conceived of marrying the King to the youngest of his sisters, Mlle. de Sens: the King, he said, having to choose between the Graces and Virtues, had taken the latter. Mlle. de Clermont, superintendent of the future household of the Queen, heard this remark: "Apparently," she said, "d'Antin takes us, my sisters and myself, for prostitutes." This is not the tone of the romance of Madame de Genlis.

Madame de Tracy relates that one day she read *Mademoiselle de Clermont* and wept for a solid hour. Madame de Coigny then said to her: "But all that is not true." Madame de Tracy answered: "*What has that to do with it, if it seems true?*" And Madame de Tracy was right. . . . Today it *seems* a little less *true*, and I do not promise my female readers, if they take the fancy of reading *Mademoiselle de Clermont*, that they

will weep for an hour. It is even possible that in certain places they might have more desire to laugh than to weep. Nevertheless, it is a pleasant bit to read under the trees of Chantilly, this tiny romance printed by Didot, and which Desenne illustrated with fine and childish little designs, where we see gentlemen in wigs and ladies in curls in surroundings of Empire style; a lovable and opportune anachronism, for it has marvelously translated the character of this sentimental novel, which never had any history back of it.

## XV

### THE CHÂTEAU OF WIDEVILLE.

**I**N a little valley, between Versailles and Maule, at the end of an immense green carpet where a few old garden statues still stand, the château of Wideville deploys its beautiful façade of red brick framed in white stone. The harmonious lines of the uneven roofs show up against the background of the wooded hillside. Around the building, wide moats filled with running water form a square, and at each angle of the platform projects a square bastion topped by a watch tower. This parade-armor harmonizes well with the robust elegance of the construction. On beholding the admirable mixture here produced by the reminiscences of the feudal manor, the graces of the Renaissance and the majesty of classic architecture, we immediately think of that magical line of Victor Hugo:

It was a grand château of the day of Louis Treize.

To tell the truth, we know no other architectural work in France which expresses with more delicacy and seduction the noble and chivalrous

charm of the period when order and discipline had not effaced all traces of fancy. And as, by rare good fortune, Wideville still belongs to descendants of him who built it, and as its possessors have preserved it and repaired it with jealous care and perfect taste, it is a living image of French art of the time of Louis XIII which we have before our eyes.

At the commencement of the seventeenth century, the manor of Wideville was a square fortress, flanked with towers and rising upon a mound; it was doubtless restored at the time of the Renaissance, for magnificent mantels of this period were moved into the new château which Claude de Bullion built in 1632 at the bottom of the valley, after he had bought the estate of Wideville from René de Longueil, Marquis de Maisons.

This little Claude de Bullion was a very great personage, though the tininess of his stature provoked all kinds of jeers. He was the son of a Burgundian magistrate, and his mother was one of the twenty children of Charles de Lamoignon. Tallemant des Réaux has related that a certain Countess de Sault had contributed to the advancement of the little Claude, and had succeeded in getting him nominated as President of the Inquests. "Ah! Madame!" she said one day to Marie de Médicis, "if you only knew Monsieur

de Bullion as well as I do!" "Gawd preserve me from it, Madame la Comtesse!" replied the Italian. Henri IV had charged him with various embassies. Louis XIII made him guardian of the seals of his orders, and then superintendent of the finances. Whatever may have been the origin of the good luck of Bullion, he showed himself worthy of his position by his talent and probity. When he became superintendent of the finances, he had the prudence to make an inventory of his property, in order to be able to defend himself against any future accusation of peculation. It became necessary for him to provide for the financial demands of Richelieu, which were terrible. So he laid new taxes and became very unpopular, but it did not displease him to oppose the multitude. In 1636, when the Spanish army had invaded the kingdom, Richelieu did not dare to face the discontent of the people, exasperated by defeat. "And I," said Bullion to him, "whom they hate more than your Eminence, I will go through the whole city on horseback, followed by two lackeys only, and no one will say a word to me." He did it as he had promised, and the next day the Cardinal, emboldened, repaired in a carriage with doors open from his palace to the Porte Saint Antoine.

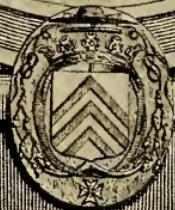
The King and his minister backed up Bullion.

He groaned incessantly about the state of the finances and forecast bankruptcy. His complaints did not trouble Richelieu: "As to the humors of M. de Bullion," wrote the Cardinal, "we must overlook them without worrying about them, when they are bad."

He was extremely rich, for he was a good manager and received each year from the King a present of one hundred thousand livres in addition to his salary. His manner of life never exceeded his income. Later, in the time of the great prodigality of the superintendent Nicolas Fouquet, people recalled the economy of M. de Bullion and the modest appearance of his hotel in the Rue Plâtri  re. As for his morals, they were scandalous, also on the authority of Tallemant. The superintendent often repaired to the Faubourg Saint Victor, to the home of his friend Doctor de Brosse, who had there founded a botanical garden, and there he indulged in gross debauchery at his ease. But we possess a very curious letter from Richelieu to Madame de Bullion, where we read: "I would like to be able to witness more usefully than I have the affection with which I shall always be at your service. Aside from the fact that the consideration of your merit would cause this, the frequent solicitations which M. de Bullion makes to me in regard to what can concern your



Armand Jean  
Cardinal Due



du Plessis  
de Richelieu

Engraving by J. G. C. F.



contentment, renders me not a little agreeable to this. I have seen the day when I believed that he was one of those husbands who love their wives only because of the money they have brought; but now I perceive that he loves his skin better than his shirt, the interest of his wife more than those of another, and that he is, as concerns marriage, like those who do not think that they have done a good work unless they do it in secret. . . ." Harmonize the testimony of Tallemant with that of Richelieu.

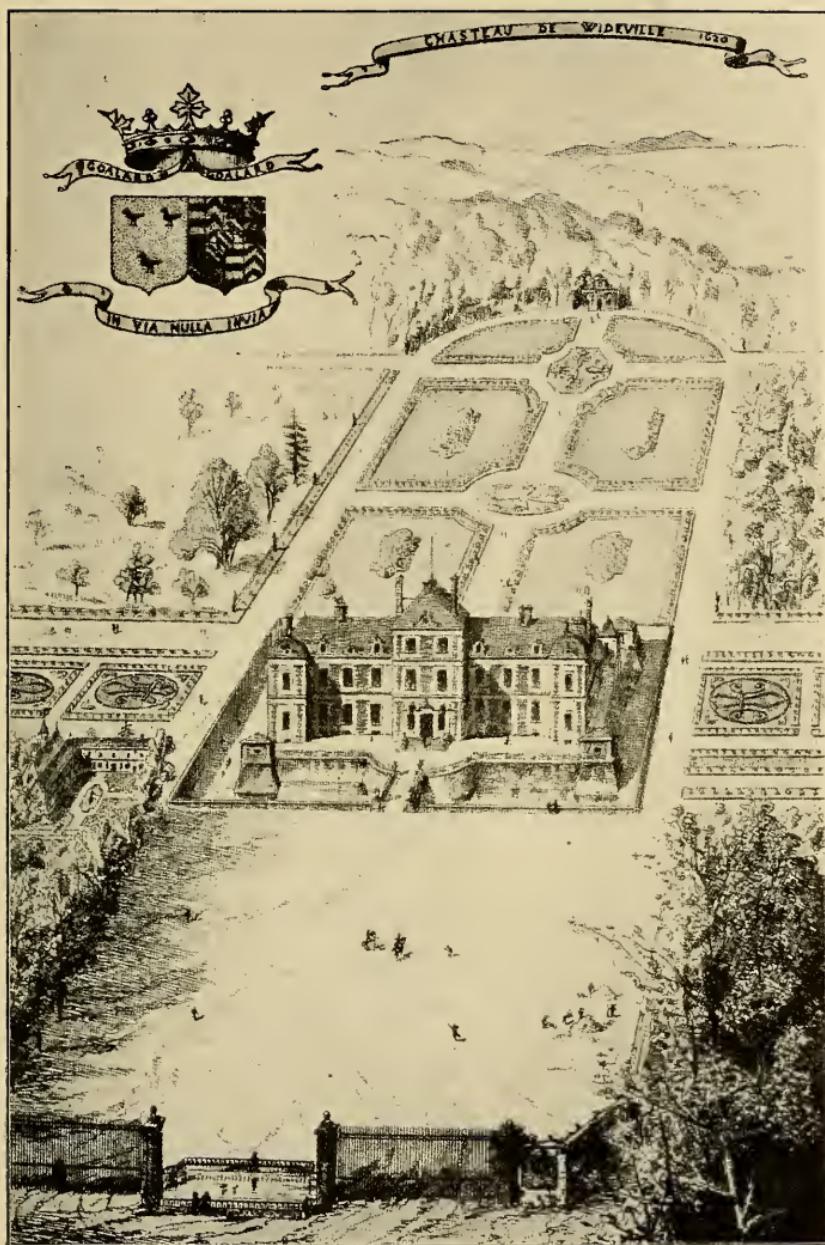
The story of Bullion's death is rather tragic. On December 21, 1640, in the new château of Saint Germain, as the King, who was already very ill, seemed to sleep before the fire, stretched out in his great Roman chair, some courtiers who were talking in a window embrasure asked one another in a low voice who would succeed Cardinal de Richelieu, whose life was known to be in danger. The King heard their words and turned around: "Gentlemen," he said, "you forget M. de Bullion." On the next day the words of Louis XIII were reported to the minister, who became furious at the thought that his place was being thus disposed of. He harshly criticized Bullion, who had come to see him as ordinarily, for having forgotten a detail of administration, and wished to make him sign an acknowledgment of it. As the superin-

tendent refused, he seized the tongs from the fireplace "to give them to him on the head." Bullion signed, but was stricken with apoplexy as the result. He was bled twice in the arm. The Cardinal came to see him, and found him without speech or knowledge. "Having seen which,"—it is Guy Patin who relates it,—"dissolved in tears, the Cardinal Prince returned. The sick man died from congestion of the brain."

Such was the man who built the Château de Wideville. The neighborhood of Saint Germain, and the nearness of the forests where the King usually hunted, doubtless decided him to choose for his residence this melancholy and solitary valley surrounded by woods.

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We do not know what architect drew the plan and superintended the construction of Wideville. We do not know to whom to attribute this building, so well seated upon the fortified platform, these façades so pleasingly designed, cut by a central projection and flanked by two pavilions, these roofs where dormers of charming style alternate with projecting bull's-eyes, these rounded platforms which unite the mansion to the court of honor and to the gardens, and that delightful coloring which is given to the whole construction by the happy union of stone and brick.



From a sketch by Guillaumot (1878)

CHÂTEAU OF WIDEVILLE



Two great artists collaborated in the decoration of Wideville, the sculptor Sarazin and the painter Vouet, for whom Bullion seems to have felt especial esteem, for he commissioned the pair of them with the ornamentation of his Parisian hotel also. Sarazin executed the four statues in niches which beautify the façade towards the gardens; he also carved the two hounds which guard the door of the house on the same side.

Behind the château are gardens in the French style. The flower-beds have been restored in the antique taste. In Bullion's time a wide avenue started from the platform, bordered with mythological statues, works of Buyster, but nothing remains of it today. The grotto, situated at the end of this alley, still exists, and this grotto is the marvel of Wideville. Of all the edifices of this species with which fashion ornamented so many French gardens in imitation of Italy, this is, I believe, the best preserved. It is a pavilion whose façade presents four columns of the Tuscan order, cut by rustic drums and charged with carved mosses. The three bays between these columns are closed by hammered iron gratings, masterpieces of the locksmith's art. Male and female figures, representing rivers, lying on a bed of roses, enframe the arched pediment which surmounts the grotto. The interior is lined with shells. The nymphæum

has lost its statues, but we still see the vase from which water flowed through three lions' heads. Stucco figures of satyrs frame the great cartouches of the ceiling, where Vouet executed admirable mythological paintings. These are now very much damaged, but what time has spared of them shows a marvelous decorator, a worthy disciple of the great Venetians.

Near the château, a pleasant little house which is called the "Hermitage," and which was slightly modified in the eighteenth century, contains some delicate wood carvings. Farther away stands the chapel, a simple oratory with an arched ceiling. There, before the altar, a stone sarcophagus bears the words *Respect* and *Obedience*; this is the sepulcher of the Duchesse de La Vallière, niece of the Carmelite Louis de la Miséricorde. Of all the phantoms which people Wideville, there is none more charming than that of Julie de Crussol, Duchesse de La Vallière. The whole eighteenth century celebrated her grace, her charity, her sharp and brilliant wit, her beauty which defied years. Voltaire versified for her his finest compliments. During the whole Revolution she remained in her château, and her presence preserved Wideville from the fate which then overtook so many old seigniorial domains. The thought of being buried under the earth had

always horrified her; so her remains were placed in this sarcophagus standing above ground.

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Like the exterior and the gardens, the apartments of the château have preserved their aspect of earlier years. Some changes which dated from the eighteenth century have been removed in order that the house might be as it was in the time of Claude de Bullion.

Three Renaissance chimney pieces adorn the great rooms of Wideville. They are constructed of white stone and of different colored marbles, ornamented with marvelous carvings, which represent foliage, sirens and female heads, and they were found in the earlier manor which Bullion demolished. Perhaps it was by the advice of Sarazin that he had them moved to the new home.

Except the guardroom, whose ceiling is a masterpiece of architectural ingenuity, all the rooms of the château have ceilings with painted beams. The enameled brick pavements are intact. Everywhere are tapestries, one of which with deliciously faded tones represents the siege of La Rochelle, precious paintings, family portraits. In the "King's Chamber" almost nothing has been changed since January 23, 1634; it was on this day that Louis XIII paid M. de Bullion the

compliment of sleeping at Wideville. And everywhere there occurs to our memory the line of Victor Hugo:

It was a grand château of the time of Louis Treize.

## XVI

### THE ABBEY OF LIVRY

THE ancient abbey of Livry, situated between the village of Livry-en-l'Aulnoye and that of Clichy-sous-Bois, three leagues from Paris, is about to be sold by public auction. This property belonged to the Congregation of the Fathers of the Assumption, who had their houses of novices here. As in a short time it will probably be turned over to speculators, who will cut it into lots for suburban houses, it is necessary before its destruction to evoke some of the souvenirs which have rendered this place illustrious.

Other than precious and charming memories, there is nothing which can interest us at Livry; and these relate only to literary history. The religious chronicles of the abbey of Notre Dame de Livry, founded at the end of the twelfth century as a monastery of canons regular, offers no episode worthy of attention. There is nothing here for the archæologist save a pile of old stones, remnants of capitals and of funeral slabs, which were discovered a few years ago. Of the architec-

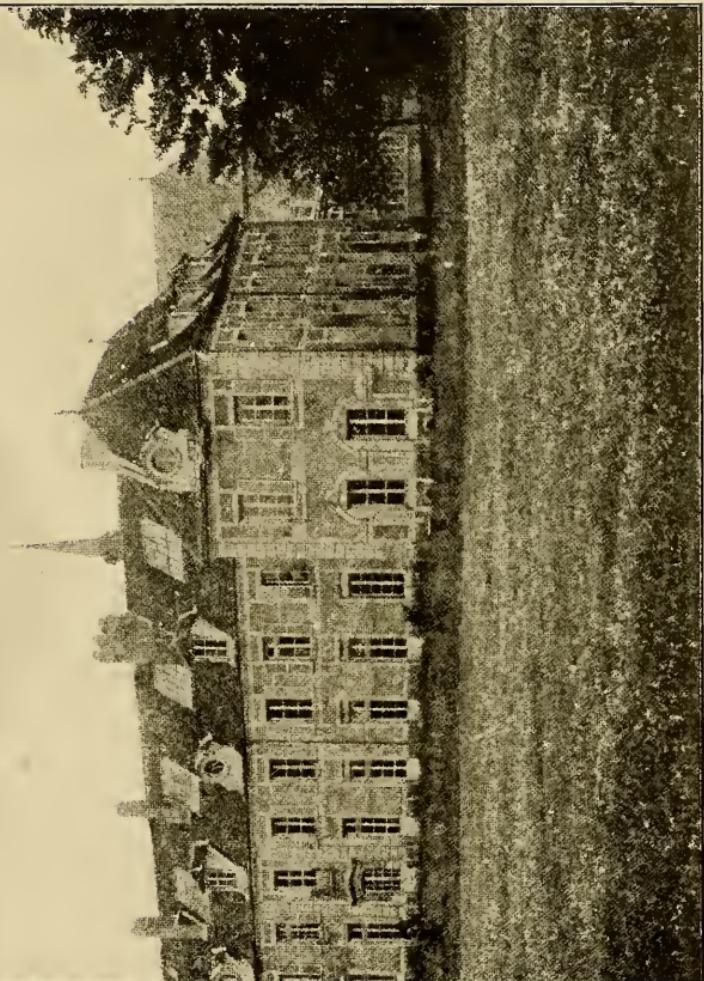
ture of the ancient monastery, there remains only a dwelling house of the seventeenth century. The rest of the buildings were destroyed after the Revolution and have since been replaced by characterless structures. Finally, though the park presents almost its former beautiful design, its trees were replanted in the nineteenth century. But Livry was the “pretty abbey” dear to Madame de Sévigné. It is here that she wrote her most charming pages, passed her sweetest hours, felt the most vividly the seduction of the country. So Livry is sacred soil for every lover of French letters.

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In 1624 the King gave the abbey of Livry to Christophe de Coulanges as commendator. He was then only eighteen years old.

In both a spiritual and a worldly sense the abbey was in a pitiable condition: its church was crumbling, its houses were scarcely inhabitable, and great disorder reigned among the few ecclesiastics who remained in the cloister. The young abbot was pious and economical. The abbey was reformed with his consent, the church restored, and a part of the cloister rebuilt. He put up this grand building of noble and simple aspect, which still stands; he made of it an agreeable country house, surrounded by orange trees, flower beds,

THE PRESENT ABBEY OF LIVRY





bits of water, and easily accessible, for a fine avenue joined it to the highway from Paris to Meaux. He furnished apartments there, received his family and his friends, and led a life without display, but without privations. Besides, if the rule was then strictly observed in the monastery, the monks were not very numerous: in 1662, there were only eight professed friars there. (Note 30.)

In 1636, the Abbé de Coulanges was invested with the guardianship of a little orphan, his niece, Marie de Chantal: the child was ten years old; the tutor twenty-nine. For fifty years he watched over the person and the property of his ward with an entirely paternal solicitude, gave her very wise masters, like Ménage and Chapelain, occupied himself with her establishment and, when she became a widow, wisely administered her fortune. But everything was said by Madame de Sévigné herself, when the "*very good*" died: "There is nothing good that he did not do for me, either in giving me his own property entirely, or in preserving and reëstablishing that of my children. He drew me from the abyss in which I was at the death of M. de Sévigné, he won law-suits, he restored all my properties to good condition, he paid our debts, he made the estate which my son inhabits the most handsome and agreeable in the world, he married off my children; in a word

I owe peace and repose in life to his continuous cares. . . ." And she adds this reflection so tenderly true and so sadly human: "The loss that we feel when the old die is often considerable when we have great reasons for loving them and when we have always seen them." (September 2, 1687.)

Madame de Sévigné had passed her youth at Livry near this worthy man. After the death of her husband she stayed there from choice. She lived happily there with her daughter, and the latter even returned there several times after her marriage. These memories rendered Livry still more dear to Madame de Sévigné, who, on an April day, after having heard the nightingales and contemplated the budding greenery of the park, wrote to Madame de Grignan: "It is very difficult for me to revisit this place, this garden, these alleys, this little bridge, this avenue, this meadow, this mill, this little view, this forest, without thinking of my very dear child." (April 22, 1672.) In the summer, when they put her little daughter in her care, she took her to Livry: "Presently I am going to Livry; I will take with me my little child and her nurse and all the little household. . . ." (May 27, 1672.) She loved to receive her son at Livry. She went to Livry to care for her maladies and to follow her treatments.

She also went there to pay her devotions in Holy Week: "I have made of this house a little Trappe. . . . I have found pleasure in the sadness which I have had here: a great solitude, a great silence, a sad office, Tenebræ intoned with devotion (I had never been at Livry in Holy Week), a canonical fast and a beauty in these gardens with which you would be charmed, all these have pleased me." (March 24, 1671.) It was her favorite place for writing, and she said that her mind and her body were there in peace. And, truly, almost all the letters which she wrote from Livry breathed joy and health.

So what despair, when, at the death of the Abbé de Coulanges, she believes that she will no longer be able to return to Livry and that she must say farewell to that agreeable solitude which she loves so much! "After having wept for the Abbé," she cries, "I weep for the abbey." (November 13, 1687.) Happily the successor of the Abbé de Coulanges is Séguier de la Verrière, former bishop of Nîmes. He is a very holy prelate, and allows Madame de Sévigné liberty to go to Livry, as in the days of the "*very good.*" But Séguier dies. New anxieties. Finally the abbey is given to Denis Sanguin, bishop of Senlis, an uncle of Louis Sanguin, Lord of Livry, friend of the Coulanges and of Madame de Sévigné. Then

she writes to her daughter: "It is true that these Sanguins, this Villeneuve, the idea of the old Pavin, these old acquaintances, are so confused with our garden and our forest, that it seems to me it is the same thing, and that not only have we lent it to them, but that it is still ours by the assurance of again finding there our old furniture and the same people whom we saw there so often. Finally, my child, we were worthy of this pretty solitude by the taste which we had and which we still have for it."

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Since we have opened the letters of Madame de Sévigné, let us continue to mark the pages in which she has spoken of Livry, and let us seek the reason for the taste for this "pretty solitude" which she showed to the end.

She knew how to enjoy the days of sadness in this "solitude," for example when she had just been separated from her daughter, or when she had received some unpleasant news from Grignan. On these days she tasted the silence of the forest and of the meadow: "Here is a true place for the humor in which I am: there are hours and alleys whose holy horror is interrupted only by the love affairs of our stags, and I enjoy this solitude." (October 4, 1679.) And, a few days later: "I wish to boast of being all afternoon in this meadow

talking to our cows and our sheep. I have good books and especially *the little letters* and Montaigne. What more is needed when I have not you?" (October 25, 1679.) But she was not the woman to content herself with the *holy horror* of the woods and to converse forever with the beasts of her meadow. She had a little of the turn of imagination of the good La Fontaine. But, affectionate and sociable, she also wished friends about her and loved conversation. At Livry she very often met her uncle, her cousins, the de Coulanges, her friend Corbinelli, the Abbé de Grignan and many others. She was neighborly with the families and guests of de Pomponne, de Clichy and de Chelles. Chariots brought from Paris loquacious visitors, rich in news. Walks on foot in the near-by forest were improvised.

Nowhere — not even at Les Rochers, where she drew so many pleasant landscapes — did Madame de Sévigné better express the pleasure given her by the spectacles of nature. She has expressed with inimitable art the particular charm of each season in a few words, and we might, by collecting certain passages of the letters written at Livry, compose, as it were, the picturesque calendar of Madame de Sévigné. Let us try it.

February: "We have passed here the three days of carnival, the sun which shone Saturday made

us decide on it. . . . We have tempered the brilliancy of approaching Lent with the dead leaves of this forest; we have had the most beautiful weather in the world, the gardens are clean, the view beautiful, and *a noise of birds which already commences to announce spring* has seemed to us much more pleasant than the horrid cries of Paris. . . ." (February 2, 1680.)

April: "I departed quite early from Paris: I went to dine at Pomponne; there I found our *bonhomme* (Arnaud d'Andilly). . . . Finally, after six hours of very agreeable, though very serious conversation, I left him and came here, where I found *all the triumph of the month of May*. The nightingale, the cuckoo, the warbler

Have opened the spring in our forests.

I walked there all evening quite alone." (April 29, 1671.)

May: "The beauty of Livry is above everything that you have seen; the trees are more beautiful and more green; *everything is full of those lovely honeysuckles*. This odor has not yet sickened me; though you greatly scorn our little bushes, compared with your groves of oranges." (May 30, 1672.)

July: "Ah, my very dear one, how I would wish for you such nights as we have here! *What sweet and gracious air!* *What coolness!* *What tranquillity!*

*What silence!* I would like to be able to send it to you and let your north wind be confounded by it." (July 3, 1677.)

August: "You well remember that beautiful evenings and full moonlight gave me a sovereign pleasure." (August 14, 1676.)

November: "I have come here to finish the fine weather and bid adieu to the leaves; they are all still on the trees; they have only changed color; instead of being green, *they are the color of dawn and of so many kinds of dawn that they compose a rich and magnificent cloth of gold which we wish to find more beautiful than green, even if it were only as a change.*" (November 3, 1677.)—"I leave this place with regret, my daughter: the country is still beautiful; this avenue and all that was stripped by the caterpillars and which has taken the liberty of growing out again with your permission, is greener than in the spring of the most beautiful years; *the little and the great palisades are adorned with those beautiful shades of autumn by which the painters know so well how to profit;* the great elms are somewhat stripped, but we do not regret these punctured leaves; the country as a whole is still all smiling. . . ."

These samples, chosen from a hundred others, show how delicate was the sentiment of nature in Madame de Sévigné. We find in her letters

all the themes with which modern poets since Lamartine have experimented: the first songs of birds announcing the spring, the “triumph of May,” the serenity of summer nights, the beauty of moonlight, the charm of Indian summer, the sumptuous sadness of autumn. We may say that these are the commonplaces of universal poetry. But as it was long since conceded that, except for La Fontaine, no one in the seventeenth century was sensible of the charm of landscapes, it is well to note these impressions of Madame de Sévigné. I know the reply: Madame de Sévigné is herself a second exception. Is this quite certain? Observe that Madame de Sévigné does not witness in the least that she considers it original to take a Virgilian pleasure in the song of the nightingale or even in the full moon. Her correspondents whose letters we possess, do not show any more surprise at these effusions. There is no doubt that they themselves are moved by the same emotion before the same pictures. They do not say so. Therefore, the rule is to communicate one’s intimate thoughts and sentiments only with all sorts of reserves and precautions; one’s “impressions” are not written down. La Fontaine scorns this rule, like all others. Madame de Sévigné does not submit to it any more than he does, because she writes only for a little group of friends, and

because she abandons herself to her expansive nature in everything. But, even if not the object of literature, the love of the country was neither less lively nor less widespread in the seventeenth century than at any other period.

Madame de Sévigné, then, is pleased at Livry because she is sensitive to the varied shadings of landscapes and to the changes of nature. But she has a singular preference for this bit of soil, so much so that she does not seem to feel the dampness there — which is unusual for a rheumatic — and that one day she will regret all of it, even to the rain: “How charming these rainy days are! We will never forget this little place.” Perhaps the landscape of Livry, this modest and gracious landscape of the Parisis which she describes so charmingly — “this garden, these alleys, this little bridge, this avenue, this meadow, this mill, this *little view*, this forest” — is what accords best with her imagination. Exalted in her maternal tenderness, passionate in her friendships, Madame de Sévigné offers the contrast of ardent sensitiveness and controlled taste. Her judicious spirit shudders at excess and disorder. The humble and fine elegance of this countryside in the surroundings of Paris must have enchanted her. She loves her estate of Les Rochers greatly, but more as a proprietor proud

of the improvements with which she has enriched her domain. For Livry she has a tenderness of the heart.

The comparison between Livry and Grignan recurs incessantly in her letters, as we have seen. Without doubt she is thinking principally of the health of her daughter when she curses the north wind of Provence and "this sharp and frosty air which pierces the most robust." But, at the same time, how clearly we see that to the harsh and rocky sites of the Midi she prefers northern nature, more gentle, more smiling, and to "this devil of a Rhone, so proud, so haughty, so turbulent," the "beautiful Seine" whose gracious banks are "ornamented with houses, trees, little willows, little canals, which we cause to issue from this great river!" On another occasion she writes: "*How excessive you are in Provence!* All is extreme, your torridities, your calms, your north winds, your rains out of season, your thunders in autumn: there is nothing gentle nor temperate. Your rivers are out of their banks, your fields drowned and furrowed. Your Durance has almost always the devil in its bosom; your Isle of Brouteron very often submerged." (November 1, 1679.)

In the last years of her life, she ended by pardoning Provence for its north wind and its sharp air; one winter, she will even decide that

the mountains covered with snow are *charming*, and she will wish that a painter might reproduce these *frightful beauties*. And it will be not only the joy of living near her daughter which will cause her thus to abjure her tastes of aforetime, but also the softness of the sun and of the light. There are no old people who can resist this sorcery. In the last letters written to Grignan there is no longer a mention of Livry.

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We would like to find today in the house and the garden of the old abbey some trace of the sojourn of Madame de Sévigné; but everything has been upset since the end of the eighteenth century.

Here is the dwelling house constructed by the Abbé de Coulanges, in which Madame de Sévigné dwelt. Where was the apartment of the Marquise? In a letter of August 12, 1676, she says: "We have made a casement opening on the garden in the *little cabinet*, which takes away all the damp and unhealthy air which was there, and which gives us extreme pleasure; it does not make the room warm, for only the rising sun visits it for an hour or two. . ." The indication is precise. We are oriented, and we recognize very nearly the position of the *little cabinet*. But was this on the first or second floor? It is impossible to discover any indication. And we walk about soberly in the

apartments, deserted since the departure of the Assumptionists: some abandoned books, collections of sermons, rest on a shelf of the library; old priests' hats lie on the floor; a béret lies on a corner of a table, a great map of Paris in the eighteenth century hangs askew upon a wall; the breeze blows through the windows whose panes are broken. . . .

The gardens have long since given place to meadows and thickets. An old orange house with broken glass is half in ruins. The basins have disappeared. Here is, however, the canal where M. du Plessis, tutor of the children of M. de Pomponne, tried to drown himself. The little bridge, near which Madame de Sévigné went to wait for her visitors or her mail, no longer exists, but the abutments mark its position, and, there also, an iron gate which assuredly dates from the time of the Abbé de Coulanges still hangs between two stone pillars. And this poor remnant of the ancient architecture is sufficient to render more lively the little picture which Madame de Sévigné has drawn in one of her letters: "I pace about the little bridge; I emerge from the '*Humor of my Daughter*' and look through the '*Humor of my Mother*' to see if La Beauce (one of her lackeys) does not come; and then I walk up again and return to put my nose into the end of the path which

leads to the little bridge; and by dint of taking this walk, I see this dear letter come, and I receive it and read it with all the sentiments which you may imagine.” (August 4, 1677.) And naturally, nothing exists of the two alleys which had been given those singular names, “under which”—the remark is by Father Mesnard, the best of the biographers of Madame de Sévigné—“one cannot fail to imagine the so different tastes of the mother and of the daughter, their so opposite characters, their occasional poutings, and their promenades separated after some quarrel, and which make us always think, the one of a beautiful smiling alley, full of light and verdure, the other of some path more cramped, more sad and more dry.” In the park, if we no longer promenade under the very trees that sheltered the reveries of Madame de Sévigné, the alleys at least have remained rectilinear and still present the perspectives which were ingeniously arranged by the gardener of the Abbé de Coulanges. Finally, the “little view” which charmed Madame de Sévigné has not changed. There is always, beyond the meadows and the park, the same horizon harmoniously bounded by a swell of land covered with woods—a gracious site, ennobled by so many beautiful memories that, if we were not entirely barbarous, we would have to save it from the woodcutters

and the builders. Ah! if there could only be found some friend of Madame de Sévigné to prevent them from touching the “pretty solitude!”

THE END

## NOTES

Note 1. Page 28. *Bossuet* by Rebelliau, in the series "Grands Écrivains français."

Note 2. Page 42. *Le Naturaliste Bosc. Un Girondin herborisant*, by Auguste Rey.—Versailles, published by Bernard.

Note 3. Page 45. *Mémoires de Laréveillière-Lépeaux*.

Note 4. Page 53. *Mémoires de Laréveillière-Lépeaux*, Vol. I, page 167.

Note 5. Page 61. I owe this quotation to the excellent work of Canon Müller: *Senlis et ses environs*. Why can we not have a book written with such knowledge and skill about every city of France!

Note 6. Page 82. Sainte-Beuve. *Port-Royal*, Vol. III, pages 510-512.

Note 7. Page 82. The historian of Juilly is M. Charles Hamel. His book (Paris, Gervais, 1888) is a moving and very vivid picture of the college during its three centuries of existence.

Note 8. Page 83. *L'Oratoire de France*, by Cardinal Perraud.

Note 9. Page 88. Published in four volumes by Dufey, Paris, 1833.

Note 10. Page 101. In regard to the history of the Oratory in the nineteenth century we may profitably read the work in which Father Chauvin has preserved the life and work of Father Gratry.

Note 11. Page 105. The Louvre has just bought an Egyptian stele for *a hundred and three thousand francs*, and the Château de Maisons going to be demolished.

Note 12. Page 113. We may remark that the Château de Maisons was later purchased by the State while M. Henri Marcel was Director of Fine Arts.

Note 13. Page 130. It must be understood that this *impression* does not correspond to archæological facts.

Note 14. Page 136. The most important document about Thomas of Gallardon is the medical report, addressed to the Ministry of Police, by Doctors Pinel and Royer-Collard, in 1816. I owe to the courtesy of M. Gazier the opportunity of seeing a copy of this report. At the same time, this learned professor of the Sorbonne has been kind enough to place at my disposal a mass of pamphlets and manuscripts, some of which are unpublished, in regard to the seer of Gallardon: I have made use of these various documents in preparing this little essay.—In 1892, Captain Marin published an interesting book: *Thomas Martin de Gallardon* (published by Carré of Paris), in which he studied numerous articles which appeared during the Restoration, and reproduced the report of the doctors from a copy in the possession of M. Anatole France. We may add that the latter wrote a charming article in review of Captain Marin's book (*Temps*, March 13, 1892).

Note 15. Page 165. The most extraordinary thing was that ingenious Legitimists later found a way to give credence to the prophecies of Martin of Gallardon without ceasing to be faithful to the Count de Chambord. In 1871, thirty-seven years after Martin's death, an anonymous author (the question of Louis XVII has been handled by a number of anonymous writers) relates a conversation which M. Hersent, a Lazarist, had with the visionary in 1830. The latter then announced that the crown of France would return to its *true heir*.

“But,” said the curious Lazarist, “how will he ascend to the throne?”

“Monsieur, he will ascend to the throne over corpses!”

“Who will lead him to us?”

"The troops of the north."

"How long will he reign?"

"Not very long; he will leave the crown to a prince of his race."

"And when will all this happen?"

"When France shall have been sufficiently punished for the death of his father."

Now see the conclusion of the anonymous writer of 1871: "Henri V has indeed said lately, in a letter which has been universally judged to be of very great importance: '*I am the heir*'; but he has not said: '*I am the immediate heir.*' If Louis XVII exists, his proposition is true; he is the heir, after the immediate heir, since, according to Martin, this true heir, who must come in an extraordinary manner, led by troops from the north, who have already frightfully punished France, is to reign only a very short time, and leave the crown to a prince of his race, *who can only be Henri V.*" (*Grave question.—Louis XVII est-il bien mort?*—Roanne, 1871.) Credulous persons are full of subtlety.

Note 16. Page 167. *Figaro*, August 8, 1904.

Note 17. Page 172. In regard to these *charities* consult the work of Émile Rousse: *La Roche-Guyon: Châtelains, Château et Bourg* (Hachette et Cie., 1892). This book,—much more vivid and captivating than this kind of local monographs generally are,—contains a very accurate and very complete history of La Roche-Guyon. I have used it extensively.

Note 18. Page 176. *Chronique de Saint-Denis.*

Note 19. Page 191. Instead of *ogive* it would be better to write here *arc en tiers-point*, so as not to annoy the archæologists. But all my readers are not archæologists and would not be interested in the fine distinctions among pointed arches.

Note 20. Page 194. This history is a reprint from the *Mémoires du Comité archéologique de Noyon* (Vol. XVII); it is adorned with numerous illustrations which show different aspects of the cathedral.—The members of a recent Congress

of the French Society of Archæology met at Noyon. The *Guide* published for members of the Congress contains short and precise notes upon the different monuments which were visited. That which relates to the Cathedral of Noyon was written by the Director of the Society, M. Eugène Lefèvre-Pontalis.

Note 21. Page 201. The stone is broken at the end of the seventh line.

Note 22. Page 206. I have taken these dates and some other facts from an article by M. Fernand Blanchard, Secretary of the Archæological, Historical and Scientific Society of Soissons (1905). This pamphlet contains a very clear summary of the history of the monument and an excellent description of the ruins.

Note 23. Page 213. These ingenious remarks on the flora of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes were made by M. Fernand Blanchard (*loc. cit.*).

Note 24. Page 217. Nothing has been done since 1905 in the way of freeing from military authority the refectory of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes.

Note 25. Page 220. The history of Madame de Monaco has been pleasingly told by Marquis Pierre de Ségur, in a study which forms the second part of the book entitled *La Dernière des Condé*. I have borrowed from this work many details regarding Betz which the Marquis de Ségur has extracted from the archives of Beauvais.

Note 26. Page 243. *Musées et Monuments de France*, 1906, No. 10.

Note 27. Page 244. The architect of the Temple of Friendship was called Le Roy; this is the name which is signed to the memorandum of the sums paid to the sculptor Dejoux for the casting of the group by Pigalle,—a memorandum which has been published by M. Rocheblave.

Note 28. Page 249. Since these lines were written the Archæological Committee of Senlis has published a work on

the gardens of Betz by M. Gustav Macon. The gifted curator of the Musée Condé reproduces in this a very complete description of the gardens of the Princess of Monaco which must have been drawn up in the last half of 1792 or the first half of 1793. Its author is unknown. According to M. Macon, he was perhaps one of the writers who collaborated at that time in the preparation of *Le Voyage pittoresque de la France*; we might also think of Mérigot, who had just described the gardens of Chantilly so attractively. To this unpublished description M. Macon has added a series of notes in which he has collected all the information which he has found in the works of other historians or which he has himself discovered in regard to the artists who collaborated in the adornment of the domain of Betz. In short, he has exhausted the subject.

Note 29. Page 266. The transformations of Chantilly have been studied and described by M. G. Macon (*Revue de l'art ancien et moderne*, April, 1898).

Note 30. Page 293. I have profitably consulted *Livry et son abbaye*, by Abbé A. E. Genty (1898).



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